

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

My first letter in the New Year must be to my dear all, and I do most sincerely hope that it will be brighter than 1944 has been to most of us. I have not been out all day until this evening when I found we were out of bread, so tried at the café but they were sold out. Aunt Eliza has kindly let me have enough for our breakfast and some of the shops will be open tomorrow so shall be fixed up alright. We have not had any maid or boy today but have managed alright. Expect the girl will be here tomorrow. I have been at my desk all day sorting out the Xmas cards which have come to hand, quite a crowd of them. It has been a nice cool day but it was sharp at five a.m. Whilst we were away, the maximum was 104 and the minimum 46. Not a drop of rain has fallen here in December. The garden has of course suffered but what can we do about it?

We returned home, as you will see by what I had written prior to leaving Fish River, on Saturday morning, Aunt Jessie, Aunt Gladys Norman as well. Aunt Gladys went straight to the dentist and had three teeth extracted. She has to come again to have all the rest drawn. They all had dinner and supper with us. Dick went to the bio in the afternoon. Sunday, Mom did not go out at all, her back was still troubling her. It has been much the same today.

We have decided to go to Uitenhage by Friday morning train, Joe having secured accommodation there for us up to 16<sup>th</sup>. I have written to the two doctors who I want to examine Mom's eyes and ears. It is only a short train journey between Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth. It will be nice seeing Uncle Owen and family there too. I phoned on Sunday afternoon to Rev Weavers asking him to let Joe know we would be leaving here on Friday morning. He said Joe was in Church in the morning and if he was not there in the evening, he would give him the message. There is still a letter from Uitenhage knocking about somewhere at Fish River but perhaps it will come to hand tomorrow as they are having a New Year dinner at the Hall this evening so I hope it will be posted then.

Mr Hultzer came to supper with us for the last time on Sunday evening. During the service Rev Karg made him a presentation on behalf of the Sunday School and how much he would be missed in Church work etc. Mr Hultzer knew nothing about this but made a neat speech in response. Then to my surprise, Mr Karg said there was another friend in church and read the following:-

**Local Preacher's Certificate of long service.**

We, the undersigned Minister and Local Preachers of the Methodist Church of South Africa, by direction of the Conference of the said Church, have conferred this Certificate of forty years of faithful service on Charles Butler this 19<sup>th</sup> day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and forty four.

Signed W.T. Whalley, President of Conference,

F.H. Rhead Marsh, Secretary,

J.W. Wood, President Local Preachers' Federation,

Herbert D. Leigh, Secretary Connexional Committee,

J.E. Strong Lay Connexional Secretary and A.E. Karg, Circuit Superintendent.

I knew such a certificate was in existence but had no idea that it was going to be presented publically. Of course, I accepted it with humble gratitude. I was very sorry that Mom was not present.

It is now Tuesday morning. Amongst the numerous greetings received recently was one from Molly Halse (now Mrs Shinn). Her Mother died last August and shortly afterwards her husband died. They were very great friends of our Vryburg days. I must write to her. Mr Fox, who took over the management of Louis Botha House after we left, writes that he had been very ill and his wife has had a stroke but is getting better. His son and wife are now in charge of Louis Botha House.

Grace is disappointed that she will not be able to come at present. Ted may be taking his Mother to Johannesburg on account of eye trouble. Aunt Emmie had the misfortune, owing to her bad eyesight, to upset a pot of boiling water, pot and all, on to her foot just before Xmas. Fortunately Joyce was there and they phoned for Gladys who lives close by. She was having her dinner and came at once. A doctor was called in and wanted to send her to hospital but when he called the next day, the foot was getting on nicely so it was not necessary. She is able to hobble about the house. Another catastrophe was the breaking of her spectacles. Joyce is going to Gordons Bay for two weeks this week.

It now transpires that the young lady who contracted infantile paralysis at Freda's home has died. She was shortly to have been married. Eric and Freda have returned to their farm for good. The experiment of running two homes was not satisfactory. Our servant has not turned up since we came back from the farms. Do not know if she is coming or not. She did not give notice nor did we.

Later. We hear that the maid is not back from the country. A boy came and worked(?) for a few minutes and then cleared off without a word. Have just been to the station to send back the empty honey tin from Frank Short which arrived during the holidays. We saw the prettiest half dozen fox terrier pups at Katkop that I have ever seen. They sell them at 15/- or 30/- each according to sex. No word of where David is drafted to. I am not attempting another sheet this week. We did not go to watch-night service but I hear it was very good and fairly well attended. Many of the congregation are away on holidays.

Lots of love to all and best wishes for the New Year.

Dad

Fairview Private Hotel, Baird Street, Uitenhage  
January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

A rather misty morning which betokens a warm day. Mom about to rise. The sun is shining just a little into our upper room. The French doors opening onto the balcony has been open all night and we have had a good night.

We left Cradock on Thursday morning, the train being up to time for a wonder. The train was fairly full and the examiner had to put us into separate compartments but we eventually got together in with two ladies and a young girl. We were quite comfortable though rather crowded. We had wired the Armstrongs the day before that we should be passing their station but found out from the Examiner that the train was not timed to stop there unless some passenger was to board the train. Fortunately this was the case and we had a few minutes talk with our former neighbours who were so good and kind to us.

Joe, Merle and Trevor were at Zwartkops junction to meet us. We only had a few minutes to wait and arrived at six p.m. After evening dinner, Joe came for us and we spent the rest of the evening with Blodwen, Joe taking us back by his car. We are very comfortable here. It is nice and quiet. We have 20 stairs to mount each time but neither of us find that irksome, evidently the lower altitude makes a lot of difference so far as I am concerned. Saturday morning Joe took us to Uncle Owen's where we had morning tea. Aunt Kate and Beryl take turns in sleeping at Joyce Tilly's house which is some distance away on top of the hill. We have seen a good deal of each other so far and hope to see a good deal more. Their house has very large rooms, something like what we had at Louis Botha House, Cape Town. It is an old building, nicely done up and enlarged. Uncle James Collett used to own it many years ago. The garden is extensive but I must write about that when I have seen more of it. The owner has only hired it on lease (14/-/- per month). He has applied to the Rent Board for a reduction and this has now been reduced to £11 per month. He has two other properties in town, both occupied. Dr Ruth (Blodwen's doctor and personal friend, spends a good deal of time at Mills Street and on Saturday evening, overhauled Mom. She quite approved of her being overhauled by both specialists. She has given her a prescription which appears to be doing her good. I also consulted her regarding my leg pains and she prescribed some Vitamin B tablets and I have been practically free of pain since. No doubt the lower altitude may have something to do with it as well. She refused to take any remuneration. She is also attending Blodwen free (when the time comes) and has had to postpone her holiday for the time being. She just pops in and out and makes herself quite at home.

Sunday morning Joe called for me and we went to service at 7.30. A local layman took the service. Incidentally, I have been asked to take next Sunday morning's service. In the afternoon, Joe called for us and took us to afternoon tea at Joyce's. Uncle and Aunt and Beryl were there as they have dinner at each home alternate Sundays so as to save double cooking. The house is quite modern and has a nice piece of ground around it. There is plenty of water (free) in Uitenhage so gardening is fairly easy. Uncle and Beryl do a good business with roses and other flowers. Joyce's house has several cracks and one of the cement pillars supporting the veranda at the front door has mysteriously been broken at its base and is standing about an inch out of plumb. I wonder if a strong wind has affected it. We all went to service in the evening. Rev Weavers is away on holiday but we may see him before we leave. The battery of Joe's car has been giving him trouble so he decided to take us in by car on Monday to Port Elizabeth and get it fixed up. He got permission to have the day off and we went in with him and Roy and Trevor in time to keep our appointment with Dr Stewart at 11.30. He had some shopping to do and met us after we had had the consultation with Dr Bekker re Mom's hearing. Dr Stewart says there is a cataract forming on Mom's bad eye and we have to go to him again on Wednesday when he will see if he can fix up stronger glasses. He also had a look at my eye that he operated on about eight years ago. He says he can give me stronger glasses now. Dr Bekker (the Doctor who operated on Olive) says there is nothing organically wrong with Mom's ears except that with old age, the "high" notes are not so easily

caught up. He says that we must talk slower and clearer and not a crowd at the same time. Of course these remarks apply specially to me.

Joe met Dick Brown accidentally in the street a few minutes earlier and at this boarding house there is a lady, the wife of a doctor (I have forgotten her name) who plays a few hymns on the piano in the lounge directly after breakfast and dinner for the benefit of the native servants. She is very interested in mission work. She and her husband have two sons, both doctors, who have been in the war. The proprietor of this house is a Mr Smith whose sister is Mrs Ousthuizen who has been the manager of the Premier Private Hotel in Cradock. She is running this place quite nicely and would like her sister to come here on a holiday.

After our visits to the doctors yesterday, Joe suggested that we should go to Humewood and have lunch there. We did so and spent a very nice couple of hours in the Happy Valley and watching the bathers. It was a perfect day. We came back via Red House and Dispatch, a road I had not been on before. The country is very dry but a few months ago there was a flood in this part, so much so that the trains could not run between here and Port Elizabeth for some days. Truly South Africa is a country of extremes.

This morning we went to morning tea at Uncle Owen's. Whilst there, they received word that Uncle was to go to hospital this evening, the operation on his eye will probably be performed tomorrow. We took Mrs Birch with us. She has been staying here for some years. She is the sister of Percy Collett's wife and has resided in Rhodesia. The elder members of the Collett family who see this will remember her and her husband. Miss Agatha Gedye was also at Cuyler Street also Nancy Cutler who is on her way to Katkop on Friday. She had a letter from Neville addressed to Mrs Neville Collett. Evidently he was anticipating! She is still such a sweet girl. She has completed her training as a nurse. Whilst we were having tea at Uncle Owen's, a phone message came through that he was to go into hospital this evening so he and Aunt Kate caught the afternoon train.

Wednesday morning. It looks like another nice day. The heat has not been at all trying so far. No rain. We have to go to town again to see Dr Stewart at 11.30. I must finish this and post it but do not know when you will get it.

Just before we left Cradock, we received an interesting letter from the teacher we had at the Plantation when the children were all young. She is now a grandmother and lives in the Waterberg district. I am sending the letter round. I have done a good deal of writing since we arrived, answering Xmas letters and still have a number still to do. I think we shall stay in Port Elizabeth for the rest of today so as to have a little more of the sea.

We had invited Uncle Owen and Aunt Kate to have dinner with us here this evening as it is the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of their wedding today but of course that is off as they are both in Port Elizabeth now.

Thanks for all letters received since we have been away. I want us to start with a clean slate as it were and consider all letters as answered and up to date. We are glad of the particulars as to how the different families have spent Xmas and New Year and that nothing untoward occurred.

We had thought of breaking our journey at the Armstrong's and seeing the elephants but think it best to go straight home when we do start. We may stay a day or two longer if the accommodation is still available. We understood that the room would be wanted for teachers returning to their duties. Will leave the letter in case there is any late news from Mills Street. It is about ¼ hour's walk from here. The children come up by themselves. We walked down there yesterday afternoon. Dr was there and Joyce Tilly. She took us back in her car. It is very awkward living in suitcases but otherwise we are comfortable. The beds are hard, we miss our spring mattresses. They may shift us into another room today. They have an annexe across the road. Aeroplanes are constantly roaring overhead. We get out post quite early every morning which is much nicer than in Cradock but of course the train service is different here.

Just off to Port Elizabeth, no news from Mills Street, Goodbye. Love to all, Dad

Later. P.S. Dr Stewart says both of us must be satisfied for the limiting work the glasses can have. Later on when Mom's cataract is "ripe" it can be removed.

Uitenhage.  
as Wednesday January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Since posting my last week's letter of two pages, I have not done any writing. Not that there has not been anything to write about but our time has been pretty fully occupied. Yet we do not seem to have accomplished much. After our visit to Dr Stewart, we thought of spending the rest of the day at Humewood. We had accepted an invitation to lunch with Dick Brown and his wife at Garlicks café – we have not seen Dick yet – but Mom got so tired that I had to cancel the appointment and we returned to Uitenhage by the next train. So far we have only seen the sea once when Joe motored us there. I was going in alone on Saturday morning but it was not considered wise. We have provisionally booked to return by Wednesday's train but Joe urges us to stay longer, there being no reason for our return except on the score of expense. Naturally we should like to see Blodwen's event off first.

One day we took the children to the Maginnes Park, Mrs Birth accompanied us. It is a beautiful shady place and there are swings etc. for the children. We took fruit and sandwiches etc and all enjoyed the outing. We returned about 3. There is a fine bowling green there too but no one was playing whilst we were there. We go to see Blodwen every day. She often goes out in the car in the evenings. On Saturday Joe took us all to the Municipal Springs. Dr Ruth also went in her car. There are swings etc there and a nice swimming bath and paddling pool for children. The young people did enjoy themselves and the older ones enjoyed watching them. Dr's little girl is only three but is very fond of Joe and Blodwen, in fact they are more like family relations. Dr is almost a daily visitor, just pops in and has tea or anything that is going. She has been most kind to them and has never made any professional charge to them since they have been here. On one occasion she left her child with them for about ten days whilst she was on holiday. We had tea out there. The swings etc have all been made by the caretaker on the Heath Robinson style, just out of any old scrap stuff he happens to have.

Uncle Owen is home from his first operation. He has to go for the second about the end of the month. Dr was very cross with him for having got out of bed and walking about the ward instead of lying perfectly still. He threatened not go on with the op if he did not carry out orders. Uncle says he cannot lie still on his back for long and feels that he is suffocating. We are having dinner with them on Tuesday. I am typing this on Monday morning in my bedroom. Since last I wrote, we have had three changes of rooms. The party whose room we occupied at first returned on Wednesday and we were shifted to the Annexe, across the road, a very slummy sort of place and not comfortable. Then they brought us back to the main building but could only give us separate rooms, one downstairs and the other up. I have the upstairs. There is a nice balcony and we are both comfortable.

Later. I find that they have book accommodation by Wednesday morning's train. It is fortunate that I did book provisionally as there would not be any chance of getting back for another week or more had we not done so. Uncle Owen was here on my return from the station. He explains that he has always had a poor circulation and a low temperature and consequently finds it suffocating to have to lie still on his back. He has promised Dr Stewart to be good in future and not get out of bed again.

Yesterday, Sunday, was dreadfully hot. It was not bad in the morning and I got through the morning service without difficulty. Mrs Theophilus – of Vryburg – was there and Mrs Booth's daughter of Cradock. The congregation was small but I got them to come to the front. In the evening Aunt Kate and Joyce were there.

I should have mentioned that Joe has had two punctures whilst we have been in his car. The one going to the Springs on Saturday was the most serious he has ever had. The tyre and tube were both spoilt. We were in soft sand at the time. Today has been very windy. We did a little shopping but we might as well be in our own home as sitting in our bedrooms in a boarding house. Tomorrow Harold would have been 52. How the years have flown.

We have both kept very well, Mom has not complained of backache and my leg pains have not troubled me except for an occasional twinge. I have not found going up and down stairs troublesome.

Many thanks for all birthday greetings duly received. Will reply to letters when we get home. Everyone has been very good and kind to me. I have missed my wireless very much but no doubt the world has got on just the same.

Am posting this early – Monday afternoon – as there will not be time to start another sheet. I am afraid that I have perhaps wearied you. We go to Mills Street every day. Had supper with them last evening. The children are all well and lively. School starts on Monday. No word of the J.C. results being out yet.

Lots of love to each and all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is not often that I leave starting my weekly letter so late as I am today. It is Tuesday afternoon and I have a special hospital meeting at 3.30 and must go and see Aunt Charlotte after that and there is some shopping to do as well so here goes.

The most important item is contained in a postcard from Joe received this a.m. announcing the arrival of his third son on Sunday morning 21<sup>st</sup>. His name is to be Dan. Evidently in his excitement, he addressed the card to Dundas Street Uitenhage but it arrived safely here. Hearty congratulations and hopes for a happy future of our 18<sup>th</sup> grandchild.

Jean has a birthday this week and Mom's falls due on Sunday week.

Reg, in his birthday greetings to me, suggests that perhaps they may bring baby down in a few months time. I do not know what you all think of her photo that has been sent round but I may be excused – as I am bad at recognising features – but I fancy a distinct Churchill expression.

Mrs Peaen and her three children are leaving on 3<sup>rd</sup> with Mrs Reynolds for her own home, 58 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue West, Parktown North, Johannesburg. Most of you have met her here. We shall miss her. We called on her last evening.

I heard over the wireless last night that an awful storm had broken over Pietersburg, six inches of rain in fifteen minutes! I wonder if Potgietersrus had a touch of the same storm.

David has arrived in Cairo. His first three meals he had in a very uncomfortable environment. It was dark and he could not see the weevils etc he was eating. He found it very cold and of course owing to his height, he had to get his warm winter outfit altered by an Egyptian tailor.

Pam passed her J.C. exam second class. Congratulations Pam but I had hoped you would have got a first. We have not heard what she is going to do now. Grace had the misfortune to slip on a piece of banana skin on her stoep and the tray of cups and saucers were all smashed. We have tried, without success, to get new ones for her but none are to be had. She does not say how she fared. Hope there were no broken bones.

Uncle Norman was in yesterday and says Aunt Jessie had a nasty experience a few days ago. She had told the servant to turn the joint of meat in the oven and thinking it had not been done, she did it herself with the result that it slipped and fell on her feet. Enid and Nancy Cuyler, both trained nurses, were soon on the spot and rendered first aid. Fortunately it did not raise a blister. Aunt Gladys is not having any more teeth out as present. The recent op rather upset her.

In a recent letter from Rex, he expresses the hope that he will see Arthur shortly as he expects to get home leave. It would be nice if both of them could come together. Rex has been away longer than Arthur. Dorothea writes that so far she is getting regular news from Denis so he evidently has not been shifted yet. She is longing for his return. We are expecting a passing visit from her about Easter.

Did I tell you that we had a very interesting letter from Rhoda Kirkman who was a teacher when we were at the Plantation. I wonder if any of you children remember her. She is now in the Waterberg district and I wonder if Dot is likely to contact her. Dot was quite small when we had the school and used to like joining in the drilling. It is surprising how small the world is.

Billy Moorcroft arrived back from Italy. He has been missing for over two years and his parents had a cable recently that he had been released in Italy. He says he sent messages to his people but they never received any of them. He escaped twice from the Germans.

At last Ted's motor has gone to the scrap heap. He bought the car second-hand when we were in Cape Town and for a long time it has been giving trouble. Mrs Irons Senior has now given him another.

Roy is very keen on buying a horse and all pocket money he gets is being put into saving certificates. By the time he has enough, I guess he will have found that something else will please him better. He starts school this quarter. Roy caught a fledgling cuckoo and up to the time we left, they had succeeded in rearing it. It was quite tame but no doubt it has flown away by now. By the

way, if any of you have spare cigarette pictures of birds, I shall be glad to supply the numbers that are missing from my book.

Since we came home, we have been having all our mid-day meals at the Premier, the cost being the same as what we paid for having three meals a week. This seems to be working satisfactorily so far.

Wednesday morning early. In my haste yesterday to get on with my letter, I find that I have made a stupid blunder by having put some of the carbon sheets in back to front. I am very sorry and I have neither the time or inclination to retype those that are wrong. The only thing I can suggest is that I ask your forgiveness and if you want to read what I have written, that you hold the letter against a looking glass and in that way, you will be able to read it. I will try to be more careful in future.

On Saturday afternoon, I received a wire from Joyce saying she could not return to Cradock at present so I spent last evening with Aunt Eliza and we discussed the situation. From Joyce's letter, which arrived on Tuesday morning, we found that she was anxious about the infantile paralysis position in Cradock on account of Ray. She would rather wait and see if after school reopens, there are any fresh cases reported or not. She does not want him to miss school but finds there is no accommodation at any school anywhere near Rondebosch as they are all full. He might get in at Observatory but that would involve a bus journey. There is a Catholic school near but that would involve extra expense and being Catholic does not appeal to her. Her return ticket does not expire until May so in the meantime, she will stay with Aunt Emmie, which no doubt will be a comfort to both of them. In the meantime, Aunt Eliza is trying to make suitable arrangements for someone to stay with her. Schools reopened on Monday and so far, I have not heard of any fresh cases. Another factor in the case is that should Dudley be released from Germany, he is under contract to return to his job at the Cape Times for at least six months and naturally they would want to be together. So we must wait and see.

Later. Pam writes that she has had a splendid holiday. Starts at the Tech on 29<sup>th</sup>. Was fascinated with a swing over the river from which they fall off into the water. Lynne writes that she has organised a big picnic by motorbus to the Katberg. No doubt they had a good time. She phoned to us but we were not back from East London at the time. Grace says Ted is not well and needs a holiday. He will be quite welcome here and it will only cost the train fare. David is still in training near Cairo. Harold has to wear glasses (4/10/- a pair). Mrs Irons Senior should go to a specialist about her eyes but who is to take her is the difficulty. Charles starts school this term. Douglas and Evelyn are all alone again. They miss the children a lot. Dot says baby is four months old and weighs 14 pounds. Norman is quite happy at school. There are five Potgietersrus boys at the same school so he will not be lonely. Mrs Beeton, their former next door neighbour, has invited all five to dinner.

You will be interested in hearing something about Uncle Owen's house and garden in Uitenhage. He has bought three houses, all let, the one they occupy is hired at a high rental owing to the wonderful garden. The house is nice but only has two rooms, large and thick walls except the newer part. The garden is not what you would call a show place. It has one thousand roses, all planted in rows about 18 inches apart. They are kept trimmed to about 18 inches high and every day as a bud forms, it is cut off. Sometimes as many as 250 a day. They are sold for the local and Port Elizabeth markets and yield a good profit. Uncle and Beryl do the work. They are paying a high rent but have managed to get it reduced by £3 per month through the rent board. They also specialise in winter flowers and vegetables. Uitenhage is fortunate in having an inexhaustible water supply – I don't think they have to pay any water rates but am not quite sure on this point. They keep one boy to help in the garden. Joyce Tilly occupies one of Uncle's houses and helps them a great deal with the use of her car.

No further news from Joe and Blodwen. No doubt we shall hear more particulars in due course.

We have been able to get a native schoolboy who comes every afternoon and works in the garden. Do not know how long it will last but it is some help.



It is dinner time and must go to the Premier. I am still trying to catch up with arrear work. Church books have to be audited up to the end of December.

I will use fresher carbon paper next time as I notice this is getting worn out. Am very sorry I made such a stupid mistake with some of the first sheets of this letter. There is always room for improvement even when you get past 81.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is Monday afternoon. I have just been along to give the Booths a basket of grapes and figs. Am sorry to say that his doctor has declared his ailment as cancer in the glands of his neck. He is looking very ill poor man and suffers pain and cannot sleep at night. I do not expect he will last long. His daughter from Kenya was down for a couple of months and has now returned by air. The trip cost her over £90. His son is in the army and has been stationed in Durban for some time. He was injured in his back some time ago. The only grandchild "little Ann" we call her, lives with the old people. She was a great favourite of Pam's. The unmarried daughter used to run a fancy goods shop but helps at home now.

Today is Douglas and Evelyn's wedding anniversary. Hope they have been remembered by the rest of the family. They are getting quite an old married couple.

Blodwen's baby is to be named Dan William. He weighed 11 lbs at birth. Some baby! We have had a nice letter from Blodwen. She has received quite a number of presents, letters and wires.

Ruth writes that from the end of February her address will be Evelyn House, Grahamstown. She is tired of housekeeping and no wonder, especially under the existing conditions. She has her old job as Assistant Librarian back and that has always been a very congenial occupation. She says that she hears regularly from Denis who is still resting.

We have had a dry thunderstorm this afternoon. Apparently rain has fallen to the south of the town. The heat has been terrific. Last Thursday it registered 106 and at 9 p.m. that night, it was still 84. It dropped to 64 during the night.

Joyce has put Raymond to school for the present and is awaiting developments. Everyone is hoping and expecting that the P.O.W.s in Poland will be released as it is quite likely the Germans have not had time to remove them owing to the rapid advance of the Russians. I am also of the opinion that the state of Aunt Emmie's health is giving her cause for anxiety. We hear that she is having bad "turns" more frequently lately for which I am sorry.

Aunt Jessie had another accident recently, fortunately not as serious as it might have been. I think I mentioned the details last week. The hot joint that fell on her foot did not cause a blister but it was very painful.

Now Alison has had the misfortune to have a fall. She left last Tuesday to spend a week with Miss Stoops (late Principal of Rocklands) at Port Alfred. On Friday she had a fall and cracked one of the bones in her right arm. She returned home this morning. This will probably handicap her writing. She does a lot of reporting etc. for Ernest.

Water restrictions are being watched all over the country. I notice that at East London, residents are not allowed to water their gardens by means of watering cans and residents are urged to have shower baths instead of an ordinary bath. The hour in the morning and evening here is not of much help as often it is only a trickle through the taps. We have not had any furrow water for a long time. I measured one of the sunflowers which had grown through the vine trellis and fig tree. It was 15 feet tall. They seem to manage without water. Our grapes have been better this year than ever before. The drought is evidently good for them. Figs too have been good. We have had a schoolboy from the Location each afternoon for the past week and he has been useful. Am trying to arrange with the ladies who assist at the Soldiers' canteen at the station to send for fruit instead of my taking it over.

Mr Stock is going to Port Elizabeth tonight to be overhauled as he has been suffering from a rupture for some time. He is dreading an operation should it be found necessary.

The sale of 86 Municipal erven took place this morning. They were almost all sold. The lowest price was £75 and some fetched over £200. Needless to say I did not buy any. Lynne writes that she organised a picnic by motorbus to Hogsback. She had been to previous ones and enjoyed them. It is a very pretty place.

I suppose all of you have wireless sets. I noticed that at 9 pm Sunday nights they are putting over the story of "The Man born to be King". It was on some months ago and is well worth listening to. I get it on the Grahamstown wavelength. Since Mr Hultzer left, the garage has been standing empty. This afternoon, I have let it for 15/- per month to the people next door. Tuesday. It nearly rained yesterday afternoon and evening. We had plenty of noise but showers fell a few miles to the south of the town. Oh, it was hot and very close on the night which followed. Today the indications are favourable but at the time of writing, 2.30, nothing has fallen. I was up at Aunt Eliza's this morning and the thermometer when I got home was 102 in the shade.

Mr Stock gave me the following quotation, Author unknown:

"I had money and a friend, on both I laid great store,  
I lent my money to my friend, and took his word there for.  
I asked my money of my friend but nought but words I got.  
I lost my money and my friend for sue him I would not.  
If I had money and a friend, as once I had before  
I'd keep my money and my friend and play the fool no more."

Much love to all. Hope you are all well and that rain will soon come,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Mom's 83<sup>rd</sup> anniversary passed off quite nicely. Being Sunday, we did not attempt much but asked three of the ladies from the Premier to come to afternoon tea. These were Mrs Rainer, Mrs Aspden and Mrs Church. Mrs Rainier brought a nice bunch of flowers from the park first thing in the morning which was very nice of her. Our morning service has reverted to 11 o'clock. Having it at 9.30 during the school holidays – as there was no Sunday School – was appreciated by many and so far as we are concerned, would like it at 9.30 all through the summer. Uitenhage has had it at 7.30 in the holidays.

I went to see Aunt Eliza before service. She had a cold but otherwise was as fresh as ever. She is wanting to turn out her pantry which I fear will be a very big undertaking as the room is chock full of furniture etc. There is no fresh news regarding the release of P.O.W.s but of course Joyce and all of us are hoping that it will not be long delayed as the Russians are now in occupation of the part of the country where the prisoners were located. I doubt very much if the Germans had time to remove them and probably left them to be cared for by the oncoming Russians.

I am writing on Tuesday morning so as to post this afternoon if possible. We had Rev and Mrs Karg, Rev and Mrs Sorrie, Mrs Craig, Mrs Kelly, Mrs Bartlett and her daughter, Mrs Clements, and Alison and Christine to afternoon tea yesterday. It was very hot – 97 in the shade but they all seemed to enjoy themselves. Mr Karg made a little speech. There was plenty of eats. Mom had letters from all the family and some telegrams, so was well remembered. Everyone thinks it is wonderful how well and brisk she is. I think of all the five sisters, she is the most active. Uncle Dudley and Aunt Kate were in on Saturday and Mrs Logie (Fish River). Aunt Rouena was also in and came along in the evening on her way to catch the evening train to Uitenhage as she was going to stay with Beryl whilst Uncle Owen was in hospital. But I was able to tell her that the "op" was not coming off until 15<sup>th</sup> so she decided to go back to Fish River and go down on 12<sup>th</sup>. She spent the night with us and caught a goods train after service, there being no passenger train on Sunday.

You will be sorry to hear that Rev Hornabrook has had a stroke and it has affected his speech and throat. Nelly wrote me such a nice letter. Of course as he is 94, there is not much chance of his recovery. Our neighbour, Mr Booth too is suffering from cancer and has had to give up his work. He is looking very bad and is very low spirited. Then we hear Joy Moorcroft had just returned from a holiday at Aliwal North and on Sunday she had to go to hospital and have her appendix out. We have not seen anything of Bill Moorcroft yet except for a minute or two the morning he arrived. They say he is very nervy at present.

Let me correct two mis-statements recently made. I said that there were two rooms in Uncle Owen's house. I should have said two bedrooms. The house is an old building. Uncle James Collett owned it years ago. It has since been divided into two and added to. It is very comfortable and well furnished. The other mistake was that Ruth was tired of housekeeping. She loves it but finds the house too large and does not want boarders anymore as it interferes with her library work, which by the way is a temporary appointment. They have the chance of getting a smaller house in May or June. Ruth says Denis is back again in the front lines. His post is stationed at a cottage and the peasant woman is very kind to him. Snow covers the ground.

The sanitary engineers have been to see about the place for installing the new system. I fear it will be another year or more before it is an accomplished fact. The official turning of the first sod was performed by the Mayoress last Friday. I notice the rain has fallen in many parts of the country. We had about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch last Tuesday. We can do with lots more.

Douglas gets post now on Mondays and Thursdays by lorry bus and they always go to town on Fridays so they are not so isolated as before. They are very lonely with all the children away but they are looking forward to Rex coming down on home leave. It will be very hard to have to part with him again if he has to return.

Grace says Ted should get a holiday again. He often has to put in 12 hours a day and she has to send in his dinner. The children go to school by bus at about seven and only come home

about two. Charles has taken kindly to school and Jean is pleased with her new standard. She wants to be a teacher. Pam is at the Tech school. Mrs Irons Senior is due to go to Johannesburg with Ted to consult a specialist about her eyes. I think they are going this week. They have had rain.

Blodwen and baby are forging ahead, both doing well. The cuckoo that they reared flew away but came back again later. Slept in Roy's room and visited Blodwen sitting on her pillow. They think it has gone for good now. Roy failed his standard last year so Joe has arranged for him to have extra lessons at an additional cost of 10/- per month.

Dot has a jaunt to Johannesburg and Pretoria with Reg. Of course baby was much in evidence. Trixie's boys wanted to keep her. Dot says they cannot think of coming down whilst the hot weather lasts.

I must not start another sheet this week. We are both keeping well. Mom has quite a lot of letters recently.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is the custom at annual gatherings of church assemblies to sing the hymn "and are we yet alive" etc. It seems to me that such would be appropriate this week. It has been a week in which history has been made. I have a faint recollection of a very hot day many years ago when a large thermometer used to hang on the wall of Midland House and registered 108. It was one of Stephen's ink advertisement thermometers and was not reliable. For the past six days, both mine and the Government thermometers have registered over 100 in the true shade. It has been terrible and not only have the days been hot, but the nights have also been so oppressive and worst of all, no rain has fallen. We started this month with a maximum of 76 then it jumped to 87, then 98.97 followed by 101, 108, 106, 110, 106 and 101. The wind for the most part has been hot from the north but even with the use of my green umbrella, it was of little help as it required so much energy to hold it up. The sun fairly burned your skin through the clothing. This house is considered one of the coolest in town, were it not so, I do not know how we should have existed. The passage is the coolest. At night we had all the windows wide open, top and bottom, and a couple of times I got up about midnight and opened the front and back doors and left them so all night. A cat or two came in one night but no harm was done. The mosquitoes have been exceptionally vicious which has not added to our comfort. It has been almost impossible to sleep. One night at two a.m. we had a midnight feast. As you know, we have an electric kettle at the side of my bed and I always make tea or coffee as required. More than once, all the milk had gone thick and one morning the fresh milk delivered about 4 a.m. was sour. Now the Dairy has issued a notice that they will deliver milk between 7 and 9 and 4 and 6 p.m. I have divested myself of as much clothing as possible and have discarded collar and necktie and adopted a sort of glad neck.

I went to see Aunt Eliza before service yesterday morning. It was hot but shortly after dinner there was a sudden change. A south-easter sprung up and Mom even took her heavy coat with her to evening service and was glad to have it on as we came home. Today (Monday) it has been delightfully cool. I doubt if it will exceed 85.

As I went to Aunt Eliza on Thursday evening before the Library annual meeting, Miss Tapp stopped me and said a broadcast message was picked up about two weeks ago for Joyce from Dudley via Zeesen. I wrote to Joyce the same night and wired as well in the morning. It now transpires that the Red Cross agency in Johannesburg had also sent her a card giving the same information. In the message he expressed the hope that they would soon be together again. It was from a different P.O.W. camp than where he formerly addressed so it is evident the Germans have removed the P.O.W.s further into Germany. Douglas and Evelyn are expecting Rex down on home leave. He and Arthur have met somewhere near Florence from what Lynne said in a recent letter. How lovely if he does not have to return.

Aunt Eliza had intended her piano to go to Eric Fear but some time ago let Mr Thomas' friend, Mr Cook, have it. Cook is looking to go back to Scotland in a few months time. Eric is not desirous of having the piano now – the children are at boarding school for another year so we have arranged to have it here for a year or more. It may arrive this week. I do not know how Mom will get on with playing as her eyesight is far from good. However she will always be able to play her famous "quick piece" which has always given such pleasure to the family from their youth up.

Ted has been to Johannesburg with his Mother to have her eyes seen to. We do not know with what result. He has not been in good health for some time and needs a holiday. It is Pam's birthday this week.

I might have mentioned that during the heat-wave, I found it necessary to remove the spring cushion seat of my office chair, it being too uncomfortably hot. Mom has also felt the heat very much. She seldom goes out but made some changes in her wearing apparel and is now suffering from backache. I hope it will yield to treatment.

Tuesday morning. What a change in the weather. The maximum for the past 24 hours was only 82 and we are able to live again. It was beautifully cool last night. About five last evening I had to

attend a special meeting of the Hospital Board to select a site for the new hospital which it is hoped to build. I feel it will be many years before it is accomplished. What I wanted to say is the beautiful cloud effect over the western hills. It was as good as any tablecloth on Table Mountain that I have ever seen. I wonder if the sudden change from excessive heat to cold was the cause. It was a very beautiful sight.

Uncle Owen goes into a nursing home today and the second stage of his eye operation takes place on Thursday. I hope it will be successful. Aunt Rouena has gone down to stay with Beryl whilst Aunt Kate stays with Uncle Owen.

On Saturday afternoon about six, Aunt Rouena, Roslin, Hope and three other little girls from Rocklands, came and had a picnic supper on the grass. Brian Collett, Wesley's son was also here. They brought a cooked fowl etc and we all had a good time. They enjoyed the grapes and spanspek we supplied. They had to be back at Rocklands by 7.30.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

The news of the week is that Ted has been to Johannesburg with his Mother to have her eyes seen to and she has now gone to visit friends in Harrismith. We have not heard how she got on at the specialists but hope it was satisfactory. Ted's health has been very indifferent for some time and has given Grace some anxiety. He has managed to get sick leave until March 31<sup>st</sup> and as I am writing this (Monday afternoon) he and Grace are probably in the train on their way to Cape Town. They will be staying with Mrs Moir – relative of Ted's – whom we used to visit at Belville. I think they are living in the Gardens area at present. No doubt Grace will send us the proper address in due course. They are leaving the three children, Pam, Jean and baby Charles with Mr and Mrs Ernest Saunders. It has been suddenly fixed up and we hope all will go well with them. They look to return via Uitenhage and Cradock. Of course no actual dates have been fixed. Grace thinks the sea air will be best for Ted. There is also a possibility of Joe, if not Blodwen and baby, coming as well but we shall know all in good time. In a recent letter from Lynne, she says she might perhaps be able to get a lift as far as Queenstown and spend the weekend here. That will also be nice if it can be arranged. By the way, she is leaving her present job and going to work at another Auctioneer's firm from next month. Then we have the prospect of a visit from Denis' wife which we are looking forward to. It is her birthday on 24<sup>th</sup> so shall be writing to her in a day or two. Today, 19<sup>th</sup>, is Christine's birthday. She says she hears from her husband who is somewhere near Cairo, two or three times a week. It is nice to know that Arthur and Rex have had a few days together in Rome. Rex is expected home on leave but no date is mentioned of his arrival. If he goes to see Lynn, as she hopes he will, we shall probably see him here too. Dot says we must not expect her and Reg, and the baby of course, until cooler weather comes. Out of 18 days this month, we have had eight over 100 in the shade. Norman seems very happy at Pretoria school. There are a number of other boys from Potgietersrus at the same school. Did I tell you that Kingsley as well as Pam ... Cecily is now boarding at Beit House where Dot was.

We do not often hear from Mary but today we did get a short letter. She hopes to take her holiday in April.

You will be glad to hear that the second stage of Uncle Owen's op has been, so far as is known, a success. He has to be kept quiet and Aunt Kate is with him. Mrs Karg, who has been very ill ever since she was here or Mom's birthday afternoon, is now getting better. It has been a peculiar case. Similar, I understand from Mr Karg, to a clot of blood at the back of the ear – fortunately not on the brain. She was unable to move her head without vomiting. She works far too hard and has difficulty with servants, tries to do everything herself.

Tuesday morning. Mr Booth, a close neighbour, has been removed to hospital. He seems to be going down hill rapidly. His son, who is in the military at Durban, has arrived to see him. Mr Stock writes that he hopes to come home from the nursing home in Port Elizabeth in a week or so. His op has been successful.

Last Friday I paid my quarterly visit to my dentist for removing tartar. One of my front teeth has been working loose for some time. He was loathe to remove it without giving me an injection but I assured him I could stand pain so out it came without any trouble. He declared it septic and no doubt it has been affecting my general health. He is going to add another tooth to my plate as soon as the gum is ready which I do not think will be long delayed. I have been troubled for some weeks with what feels like an air bubble in my left ear, such as one gets when bathing. It has caused much giddiness and frequently I find myself hanging on to any object I can lay my hands upon. My walking must remind an onlooker as that of a drunken man. I went to consult Dr yesterday but he was full up with appointments but am going again at noon today. The heat has been terrific lately – 106 yesterday – and it takes it out of me. I found by tying an old necktie tightly round my forehead when I go to bed affords some relief. We have been sleeping in the spare room the last few nights and find the room quieter and cooler than ours.



Our figs are all finished. Plenty of grapes still. Have given away heaps and there are still plenty. The difficulty is delivering them. If people would only come for them it would be easier.

Rev Sorrie was planning to visit his brother in Kimberley and friends in Johannesburg but owing to the death of a Presbyterian minister in Queenstown, he had a "call" to visit that town. He has gone over there to view the situation. He was intending to call at Kroonstad to see Ted and family. If he accepts the call to Queenstown, his visits will be off. We were particularly sorry to hear of the sudden death of Rev Stephenson who we knew so well as the minister at Observatory. He had just been appointed to Bathurst in succession to Rev Karg. His wife was an artist and a local preacher. We met them again when we were at East London when we were all there.

More to follow, if possible, after seeing doctor.

Tuesday afternoon. No post from anyone today which is most unusual. If Ted and Grace left home yesterday morning, as we presume they did, they should be in Cape Town by now, 3.30. We hope they have had a comfortable journey. Here it has been hot as usual. A slight shower has fallen since dinner but not enough to register.

Well you will be wanting to know the result of my visit to Doctor. I had the best part of an hour with him. First he syringed both ears and there is certainly an improvement in my hearing. Then he inserted an instrument in each nostril and pumped some menthol or similar smelling stuff which was not a very pleasant sensation. I hope the result will be lasting. He also took my blood pressure which he said was higher than it should be but evidently not serious. I mentioned that it had been suggested that we should take a six months trip to each of the children. He does not forbid it but does not recommend my going to a higher altitude. Last time I consulted him he said it would not do any harm if I took it easy and by degrees. However we are not suggesting anything of that sort at present. I have a strong desire to see you all in your various homes but the war should be over before that happens I think. With regard to my leg pains, he says it is evidently closely related to some form of rheumatism and has given a prescription which I am to take for the next fortnight and watch results. The giddiness no doubt will lessen now that he has removed a good deal of wax.

I hope the foregoing will allay any fears which might have arisen as to the state of my health and I hope for a decided improvement to what it has been lately.

I hope we shall hear good news from you all tomorrow.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Dot has drawn attention to the fact that she generally gets my dear all on Fridays instead of Saturdays. Perhaps others have noticed that theirs also comes earlier than they used to. The reason is that I usually begin typing on Monday and post on Tuesday afternoon. I find by waiting for the post to arrive on Wednesday, it is so often late in being delivered that there is not time to read your letters and reply to them the same afternoon, hence the change. Douglas and Evelyn now get their post three times a week. The motorbus service passes Myburgsfontein – a few miles from Grass Ridge – twice weekly and they always go into town on Fridays so it seems to suit all concerned. Kroonstad does not have a direct bag from here so their post lies over for a day at Bloemfontein. Uitenhage and Grahamstown get their copy on Wednesday morning.

A postcard from Grace received this morning (Monday) reports their safe arrival at Cape Town. They are looking to have a restful time, no gadding about, just rest. I hope this will have the desired good effect on both of them. They have booked to leave Cape Town on March 15 and spend Saturday and Sunday in Uitenhage, leaving there Sunday night and arriving here Monday morning 19<sup>th</sup>. Blodwen wrote that they had arranged for baby Dan to be christened on Easter Sunday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. I hope they will alter this and have it the Sunday Grace and Ted will be with them. We shall not be able to go down, I am sorry to say. If this could be done, it would make it possible for Joe to spend Easter with us, if he so wished. We should like it. I do not know if Grace and Ted will be with us for Easter, it would be very, very nice if it could be.

We had a letter from Denis on Saturday, his wife's birthday. He is still in Italy, back in the fighting line. He thinks the war will be over late in June and he hopes to be home in September and after a few months holiday, be able to settle down and be back at Rhodes University next year. He acknowledges the receipt of the box of crystallised fruits I sent to each for Xmas. He hears from home about twice a week. He sends greetings to all relations.

Douglas and Evelyn have been looking forward to Rex coming home on leave but have now received word that he is not coming at present. He thinks it best to stay until the European war is over. Of course they are terribly disappointed as they have been looking forward to his return for some time.

We have not heard from Pam as to how they are getting on since their parents went to Cape Town. Ted's Mother has gone to stay in Harrismith. Grace and Ted's address is 42 Woodside Road, Tamboerskloof. I will give you David's address later. He seems happy and well where he is.

Aunt Jessie and Enid were in a few days ago. Aunt Jessie had broken out with a rash all over her body. Dr puts it down to eating grapes. She was well enough to play the organ at service last week. Her feet have given a lot of trouble since the accident. Dick was also in to have a whitlow lanced on his finger. He has suffered a lot of pain.

Reg has had the phone extended to the house. He is Secretary to the Hospital and is often called up. Dot is thrilled as she is now able to get in touch with people without going out. I guess it will be an expensive call from here should occasion arise. For your information, their number is 24. Douglas has tried to get it but war conditions do not permit. There has been another case of infantile paralysis at Potgietersrus. No fresh cases here since school reopened.

Mary looks to take her holiday in April provided the Dr is well enough. He has been suffering from a septic foot for some time. Aunt Eliza is asking her to stay with her.

The Sorries are leaving on Wednesday morning for Queenstown. He has accepted the "call" to the Presbyterian Church there. We shall miss them as they live just at the corner by the park. At the service last evening, I was asked to express the thanks of the congregation to him for his willing service when Mr Karg has been away. Rev Karg should have taken the evening service last night but had an attack of flu so Mr Sorrie took both morning and evening. Of course this knocks on the head their visit to Kimberley, Kroonstad etc. They have had the use of the big table in the workroom for the past three months.

Am glad to say Mrs Karg is better and about again. The daughter will be going away for a month's holiday shortly.

I am having all the outside woodwork repainted. It has needed it for a long time. Mr Muller is doing it and has started today. Perhaps the inside may need doing later but one grudges the expense.

Am sorry to say neither of us have been very well the last week. The heat continues and practically no rain. I still get giddy but am continuing with Dr's medicine. Mom has gone to the Women's meeting this afternoon. I have not been out of the house all day. This frequently happens now. Ernest spent an evening with us recently. Alison is using her arm again. Jeffrey is still at Roberts Heights. Christine is at home. Baby Dan has put on 1½ lbs in his first month. That is good going. He sleeps well and generally they have good nights.

We are still giving away grapes as fast as we can in case we have a heavy storm which would mash them up. Figs are about finished. I seldom eat any fruit.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

There are some changes of address which please note on your writing pads or your address book – if you have such a useful article:

Ruth, Evelyn House, Private Hotel, Grahamstown.

Lynne, c/o Elliott Bros, Box 62, Queenstown

329410 V. Lt D.R. Butler, R.A. 160/57 Fd Regt RA. CMF.

583585 V. Sign. D.K. Irons, 6<sup>th</sup> S.A. Armoured Division Reserve Sig, Sqn.UDF/CMF

Monday afternoon. We see by the Stellander, just arrived, that Mr Southall, who was manager of the Standard Bank, Vryburg in the latter part of his stay, died suddenly on his farm last Friday. He and his wife were a nice old couple.

Grace writes that Ted is better for the change. They have been for some nice walks and admire the scenery of the mountains etc. They saw Darters big fire and also some of the recent bush fires on the mountains. So far, there is no change in their plans so this day IN two weeks, they should be with us. We do not know if there will be any opportunity for them to visit Fish River. It was Uncle Dudley's and Aunt Kate's Silver Wedding Anniversary last Saturday. Grace and Ted have met Joyce and Olive but so far have not see Aunt Emmie.

Gladys and Tom have bought the house they have been living in for many years. They are making a number of alterations and improvements, including a new floor to the kitchen and built in cupboards etc.

Dot reports that Joan "is putting on" whatever that may mean. She has certainly brought a lot of happiness to the home and incidentally, a lot of extra work. We look forward to making her acquaintance later in the year. Dot thinks we have had it hotter here than what they have experienced. Out of the 28 days in February we registered, 12 were 100 and over in the shade. The highest was 110. We have had some very cool days since. In fact, the eiderdown was a comfort at night. We had 65 points of rain on 28<sup>th</sup>. A terrific thunderstorm passed over about 11 p.m. One clap of thunder must have woken half the town. Both of us got up and took a walk through all the rooms but nothing serious had happened. Dot says Mrs Legg is going, or has gone to live in Durban. They will miss her a lot. Dot was able to attend a farewell party to five ladies who were all leaving the town. Reg was left in charge of baby. We lost 17 people from the church here last quarter. They were plucky to attempt a Flower Show up there. Nothing like that here this season. We are having a three day Agricultural Show here this month, which I don't think is wise.

Am glad to say Mr Stock is better after the "op". Have not seen him yet but we exchange greetings over the phone. I was not able to attend the funeral of our neighbour, Mr Booth, last week owing to the rain. His widow is remaining in Cradock. The house is her own. She has had a number of people wanting to buy it. I still get enquires for this house and believe it would fetch anything from £1500.

Grace writes that David has arrived in Italy and seems very interested in his work. Apparently he is in the front line reserves. It has not taken him long to get the necessary training. Harold writes that he has completed his first year of his apprenticeship and would like to enlist. He is interested in the Boys Brigade. Pam is quite happy at the Tech school and they all seem to be enjoying themselves at Saunders whilst their parents are away. Charles loves his school. Lynne says all the girlfriends are missing the RAF boys now that the Flying School has closed down. They had about 1000 of them. The girls have now settled down to sewing and are making their trousseau!

Am sorry to say my leg pains have been troubling a good deal during the past week. I am still taking Dr's medicine. Some days it is much worse than others. I am trying to break myself of the habit of sitting with my legs crossed. I do not know if that has any effect but I find it very difficult not to cross them. Tuesday afternoon. I do not know that there is much to add except that we have had an unexpected increase in the domestic family. Since we have lived here, we have never owned a cat or dog or bird. But recently a number of our neighbour's cats have visited us and

more or less made themselves at home. A couple of mornings back I found a black cat had made a nest on top of the table on the back stoep under my filing cabinet and deposited three kittens there. I have made them comfortable under my tool bench for the time-being.

The Emergency League are running a bazaar all day today in the Town Hall and winding up with a concert this evening. I do not think we shall go. Am going to see Aunt Charlotte this afternoon at the Old Ladies Home as it is her 89<sup>th</sup> birthday. I go by taxi. Aunt Jessie and others are in town but have not seen them yet.

A few lines from Joe saying baby is getting on nicely. They are expecting Ted and Grace for a short visit. Uncle Owen is home again from hospital. It has been a very trying experience for him. The collection on Sunday at the Harvest Festival was 27.17.11, a record.

Hope to have good news from you,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is just six a.m. Tuesday. As I did not start my letter yesterday, as I generally do, I must get a move on. As a matter of fact, I had an exceptionally fine clearing up day at my desk and was able to get a lot of arrear work out of the way in preparation of Grace and Ted's arrival next Monday morning. Dulcie and Fenner called about six and it may interest you to know that Fenner has given up smoking during the past few months and he says he is a new man. He has put on weight – practically weighs 200 lbs and is much better in health. That has been the experience of many. They have interesting stories to tell of how Billy fared when he jumped off the train when being conveyed from Italy to Germany as P.O.W. The first time he jumped, he fell on his head and lay unconscious for some hours. It was in the night. He was captured again some time after and sent to Germany. This was near where the fighting is going on now in North Italy. The second time he escaped, the whole truckload of prisoners agreed that during the night they would all jump off the train. He was the 9<sup>th</sup> man to jump but does not know what became of the rest. The guards had threatened to shoot any that remained in the truck if any did get away. He lived amongst the peasants who treated them well. He has learned their language and writes and is fluent in it. He thinks when he goes back, he may get the job of being appointed as interpreter. I must not dwell on these matters as other news has to follow.

You will be sorry to hear that Rev Jennings, who was a missionary for 38 years in Bechuanaland and "supplied" here for a while when Rev Barnes went on six months furlough, died at Plumstead after three days illness. I stayed with them the first time I went to Kuruman.

Mrs Chatterton, Ted's Aunt I think, who was staying at the Premier but returned to her home in Pretoria some months ago, has been laid up for a long time with a nurse in constant attendance (£10 per month) now reduced to 7/10-. She now has to undergo a serious op. We are very sorry for her. We saw a lot of her. She wanted to build her own house here.

Olive has been staying at her sister, Hilda's, since she left Cape Town. But as her other sister, Mildred, has to have her tonsils out, she has gone to help her. We hope we shall see her on her way to Port Elizabeth. She wants to settle down after her long tour. We are glad to hear that she is well and bright.

We are sorry to hear that George Metcalfe, Douglas' neighbour, was thrown from his horse and dislocated his shoulder. Douglas took him to town and got it fixed up. Evelyn is counting the days almost to the school holidays. I think I gave the wrong box number for Lynne last week. It is 61. She does not think she will be able to get across for Easter nor do we know if Joe is coming.

Josie Biggs has been down with enteric. Wonder where she could have picked it up. She is better again.

At last the contents of Mr Thomas' shop has been sold. Cull and Kew have bought the lot so the shop will be to let. I am thinking of offering my services to run the stationery business for them. It is time I earned a little. At present it is simply a case of eating up our small investments for which, with one exception, we get little return in the way of interest. His South African creditors, I understand, will be paid out in full but the overseas ones will not as their claims are "prescribed", being over eight years old. Aunt Eliza's piano arrived last Tuesday afternoon. It was very awkward as we had visitors at the time and then Uncle Norman, Gladys and Dick arrived. Dick helped offload and bring in the instrument. It weighed 650 with the case. I did not lift it. We got four boys to help. It now appears that Mr Thomas had made some arrangement regarding its return but I won't go into that now as I am in correspondence on the matter.

Lynne says that Arthur and George Hudson have been together ever since they enlisted. This is very nice. She likes her new situation better than the old one and incidentally, she gets better pay. Rev and Mrs Sorrie are staying at the same boarding house. She went to hear him preach one evening and enjoyed the service. Am glad to say the Karg family are all well now. The daughter that was operated on has gone for a month's holiday to Bathurst.

I am glad to say that my giddiness has left me and I hope it will not return. I left off taking Dr Scholtz' medicine a few days ago. I do not know if that is why I am better. Perhaps it may be that we seem to have finished with the excessive heat lately and we have also had over an inch of rain this month so far. The maximum in the shade on 11<sup>th</sup> was only 65.41 degrees lower than it was on February 10<sup>th</sup>, some difference. My leg pains have also been much less. There was a very heavy dew last night. Mom is still suffering from back ache. Wonder if Grace will be able to suggest a remedy.

Aunt Eliza has had her pantry-dining room re-colour washed and it looks all the better. I am having all the outside woodwork repainted. I grudge the expense but it was badly needed doing. We have removed the big rose tree from the end of the front veranda. It was some job.

The cat and three kittens are flourishing. They will soon be running about. We have found a home for them. A railway man who works at the station now comes every morning for the basket of grapes for the soldiers. This saves me a journey.

Breakfast is over and my sheet is full so I must stop with love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is Tuesday morning, an hour earlier than usual. It is the Agricultural Show Day and there may be visitors dropping in which might hinder my getting on with my usual letter. I must be brief in any case.

Grace and Ted arrived according to plan at 7.30 Monday morning and we are pleased to see them both fairly well. They have benefitted by their change to Cape Town but did not have much time at Uitenhage. In fact they have had three nights in the train since leaving Cape Town. They slept at Joe's on Saturday. They found it very hot in Cape Town and it was wet and cold in Uitenhage. It was cold here yesterday. Blodwen's baby is a fine chap and is getting on nicely. Uncle Owen is able to see but has still to have another op the same as I did. He talks of going up to Vryburg again to see Maude and Mike. Joe took them to see the Springs at Uitenhage and Uncle went with them. Ted says there was no shipping in the Bay and they saw practically none at Cape Town. They are looking to leave for home next Tuesday or Wednesday. In order to avoid arriving at Kroonstad in the middle of the night, they intend leaving by the early morning train and spending the day at Naauwpoort with some old friends there and catching the train from Cape Town about ten pm which lands them at home at dinner time. They went to see Aunt Eliza before dinner and found her well and busy as usual. She has given them a pair of pigeons which they are taking for Charles.

About dinner time, we had a phone call from Cousin Ellie Collett (Ethnie's mother) asking if we could have Mary who was coming down for the Show. She had a lift by car and only arrived here about 9 pm. She is exhibiting cattle etc and they had come by train so she had to see them fixed up in the Show grounds for the night. Ethnie has another daughter born on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Ethnie's mother, Mrs Mason, died from cancer four days before the baby was born. She had suffered great pain but died very peacefully. K

Joe has not been well and last week went to Port Elizabeth to be X-rayed. He has not heard the result by the time Grace and Ted left them. We are anxious to know the result.

We had a very nice letter from Nellie Hornabrook. Her father is much better after his recent stroke and was able to attend church on his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. He is wonderful. Reference was made to the fact in Church and after the service, everyone congratulated him.

Evelyn writes that the children will be home in two weeks time for ten days. They have had more rain and the garden and veldt is good but they expect an early frost. Trixie and her family are expected at Madrid – her old home. By the way, it is Trixie's birthday. I wonder if you all heard over the wireless that the 6<sup>th</sup> Army Division was being withdrawn from Italy. It was not stated to what front they were being transferred. This is the Regiment that Arthur, Rex and David, we think, are in. We have had a nice long letter from Lynne. She likes Mr and Mrs Sorrie who are staying at the same hotel. She has given up the hope of coming here for Easter. So far as I can see, we shall not have anyone with us. Grace and Ted want to be home for the school holidays. Grace has shown us a nice photo of David taken in Cairo. He looks very well. They have good news from him. It is David's 19<sup>th</sup> birthday on 31<sup>st</sup>, the same day is the anniversary of Reg and Dot's Wedding Day – 19<sup>th</sup> and also Joe and Blodwen's 13<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations to all concerned. Last week I wrote to all four grandsons in Italy.

Mr and Mrs Stock have a joint birthday this week. We have been asked to have morning tea on Thursday. We were sorry to see by the Stellander that Rev Jennings died suddenly on 3<sup>rd</sup>. Have written to his son, Kingsley, who married Rev Legg's eldest daughter who worked for me when at Vryburg. Am sorry to hear that Kingsley Hudson has heart trouble and has to leave Bulawayo for a time. Leslie Hudson is going in for Afrikaner cattle. Has given up dairy farming, not being able to get servants for milking. This is a sorry lookout for the country if it is widespread. Grace and Ted saw Mrs Florence and Una a couple of times at Fish Hoek. Dot says they took £40 at their Flower Show recently. At a recent bazaar here in aid of the war funds, over £700 was taken.



Mrs Aspden, mother of Dot's neighbour, has been to Somerset East on a short visit to her son, I think. She travels about a good deal. I don't think I told you of the experience I had recently when Dick motored me up to see Aunt Charlotte on her birthday. He locked his car and when he came out to take me home, he found that the car key was locked inside. We had a job to open the small ventilator windows so as to pull out the glass and so get his hand in to open the door. We were afraid he could have to break the window but after about half an hour's struggling, we managed it.

There has been a sudden drop in temperature the last couple of days. For yesterday, the maximum was only 66, exactly 40 degrees lower than the maximum for the corresponding day last month. The minimum for the past 24 hours was only six degrees above freezing. I guess it will freeze tonight. It is going to be a lovely day for the Show. The Show lasts for three days. I do not know if we will go to it. We are the only town in the Eastern Province that is holding a Show during the war. Personally I was opposed to holding it.

On 28<sup>th</sup>, it will be 63 years since Uncle James and Aunt Letty were married. There is no news of Mary coming down for her holiday yet. Perhaps she will not visit Cradock but we must wait and see. Olive is still at Graaff Reinet I expect

Mary has been over to the Show ground to see that the bulls and cows are alright.

Must stop now as it is breakfast time.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is Tuesday morning and I have been to the station to see Grace and Ted off to Kroonstad. They have spent eight days with us, the weather has been kind to them, having had a few showers, not too hot or too cold. Nothing very exciting has happened. They have been to see Aunt Eliza a few times and incidentally, have taken a pair of white pigeons home for baby Charles. They went up to Market Street last evening to catch them and Aunt Eliza has lent them a small cage in which they will travel. They were fighting each other in the cage all the evening and I hope they will arrive alive. One afternoon, we had Mrs Fourie and Mrs Evans, mothers of the girls that Pam was very friendly with, to afternoon tea. The girls were also here once or twice. Dulcie Moorcroft also came to see them. Mrs Rainier and Mrs Aspden have been. Ted knew a relation of Mrs Aspden's at Parys years ago. Mrs Aspden is going to Parys at the end of this month. Both Grace and Ted have been very busy doing all sorts of jobs for us. My socks, Mom's garments etc. have received attention from Grace whilst the picking of grapes for distribution has been done by Ted. Ted has also fixed up the music stool for which Joe made an important part. The screw regulating the height of the seat having worn out, he cast a new one and now it is as good as new. Lots of other jobs about my desk have had attention. The two arches in front that have got overloaded with Jasmine have been trimmed up by Ted and will soon look nice again. I notice Autumn tints are already on the Virginia Creeper on the tanks so we must expect winter very soon.

The Agricultural Show was a great success – so everyone says. I did not feel equal to going to see it but all the rest went, some twice. Mary Collett from Collett Siding was very busy looking after her four bulls, four cows and some calves. She had to get a lorry to go and buy forage for the animals from farms nearby and she helped cut same and bring it into the Show yard. She got a second prize and cup valued £20 which she is entitled to hold for the year. She is a hard worker. She is managing her brother's farm whilst he is a P.O.W. Mary left by car after seeing to the trucking of her animals after the Show on Thursday evening. We hear that Ethnie, who used to read to me when I was so blind, has another baby. This was born four days after her mother died of cancer at Aliwal North. Ethnie's husband has been discharged from the army.

Nurse Mary looks to take her annual holiday about the second week in April. She will spend the first few days in Johannesburg then comes on here and will make her headquarters at Aunt Eliza's. Of course she will go to Graaff Reinet to see her mother. You will be interested in hearing that Christine (Ernest's daughter) who married Rex Moys, has a son born on Sunday. Both are doing well.

We have tried the experiment of sending grapes to Joe. The first box arrived in good condition and were appreciated so we have sent another box which I hope will be as satisfactory. Joe had made, or got made for me a "bush" for the music stool which used to be Aunt Lettie's. The stool now is as good as new.

Uncle Norman slept here on the night of the Show as he wanted to buy some off the horses that were exhibited. We made him a bed in the drawing room. He did not come to supper as we expected and after waiting up for him, thought he might have changed his mind and gone home. We phoned to Fish River but got no reply so at 10.30 I switched off the light. He came later having been to the bio! They have not heard where their three sons – P.O.W.s are. Now we hear that the 6<sup>th</sup> Division has been withdrawn from Italy and are wondering where they have been sent. We had a letter from Arthur this week and he says he does not think they will be in Europe much longer. Grace and Ted had letters from David whilst here.

A railway man who works at the station has been calling for the basket of grapes for the soldiers each morning for some weeks but has not been the last three days. I do not know if he has been shifted but I have told the workers at the Refreshment booth that unless they can make some plan to have them fetched, I shall have to discontinue as I cannot go over and carry the basket, I get too tired.

I am glad to say that Ted seems better for his holiday. He is very quiet at times but it is refreshing to hear him give a hearty laugh now and then. He has been able to do a spot of reading. They are staying over at Naauwpoort from noon today till this evening so as to avoid arriving at Kroonstad at midnight. They have an old friend who lived with them at Kroonstad years ago, now living at Naauwpoort, so will have a rest there until about 10 p.m. and arrive home at dinner time tomorrow. The children are excited at their return. They have kept well whilst staying at Ernest Saunder's. Clifford spent the evening with us last night and enjoyed the time. Grace and I went to see Aunt Charlotte yesterday morning. She wanted to see me about her money matters. She was 89 on March 6<sup>th</sup>. She is getting very feeble and cannot see to read or write. She wants to buy some new clothes etc.

Mr Muller has nearly finished painting the woodwork around the house and I hope it won't want doing again for a long time. It looks very nice whilst it is fresh. The walls also want colour washing but that must wait for the present. It should have been done before the painting was done but the man was not available at the time. I see I am at the end of the page so must close for the present.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is Monday (Bank Holiday) afternoon. A perfect day so far as the weather is concerned. The last few days have been very fine. Winter is getting near and I notice that the autumn tints have already appeared on the trees. Last Wednesday about six p.m. we had quite an unexpected hail storm. I was on the front stoep at the time and before one could say Jack Robinson, the ground was white with stones. There was a considerable wind with it. Our grapes have suffered considerable damage and the place was soon covered with leaves. It only lasted about 15 minutes but when I went to bed, there was still hailstones in sheltered places. However there are a few bunches to be gleaned but the bulk of the crop is finished. This year's yield has certainly been the best we have ever had. Personally I seldom eat a grape, I find they do not agree with me. Next year, if we are spared, I think we will sell them at 1½d or so per pound. I see the maximum price fixed by the Control Board is 6d per pound. We have sent a couple of boxes to Joe and they arrived safely.

Aunt Letty was married 63 years ago on 28<sup>th</sup> of last month. She is keeping wonderfully well considering she is in her 89<sup>th</sup> year. She asked me to try to obtain tatting shuttles and have been able to get two for her, one each from Aunts Eliza and Charlotte. Mom still does a little of that work. She must have given away many yards of her work to one and another. Her eyes will not permit of her doing it now to any extent. Talking about eyes, Dot in her last says she is concerned about hers. She says she thinks something has gone wrong with a bone at the base of her neck and is thinking of going to Pretoria to consult a specialist. Perhaps she will return with Norman when he goes back to Boarding school. Her baby is flourishing, sits up and weights 16 lbs.

Grace sent us postcards from Naauwpoort and Kroonstad station saying they had had a comfortable journey. Their friend met them at Naauwpoort. They had a first class compartment to themselves. We hope to hear in the morning that they found everything alright at home. I feel doubtful if both the pigeons arrived alive. Douglas and Evelyn were looking forward to Kingsley and Cecily's arrival home for the short holidays. They have had good rains but they fear too late for the mealie crop.

Ruth sent us a letter from Denis and one from Dorothea, both very interesting. Denis was going on leave to Rome for a holiday and had his programme all mapped out as to what he wanted to see. Dorothea, in her letter, is hoping Denis will soon be home as he hinted that they might meet each other sooner than expected. Dorothea may come and stay a few days with us on her way back from Grahamstown. I think she is there just now. She and her father were going by motorbus and train through the Transkei to Grahamstown and may return to Maritzburg by train via Cradock, Bloemfontein etc.

We are hoping to hear how baby Dan William behaved at the christening yesterday. Mr Muller has taken one of the kittens. The two left are growing nicely. We shall not keep them but they have been quite interesting, watching them grow. They are very prettily marked.

Mrs Aspden mother of Dot's next door neighbour, left on Saturday for Parys on a visit to her relations there. Later in the year she will be going to Pietersburg. She expects to see Potgietersrus folk as well.

You will be sorry to hear that Mrs Karg is suffering again from her former trouble, giddiness and unable to move her head. She may have to go to Port Elizabeth again for treatment. Their daughter who was so ill is still away for a change. She expects to get an extra month's sick leave.

Mr Muller is still busy painting the outside woodwork. Today the front door is having attention. He uses a blow lamp to get off the old paint.

We have not heard definitely when Mary arrives. She was planning to spend a weekend in Pretoria and Johannesburg. She is going to Graaff Reinet from here. The following lines by the Rev R. Barr of Mowbray should be used in every pulpit:

Our Sunday morning prayer  
O Christ, who giveth weary feet the gift of rest,  
May no one leave this house today untouched, unblessed,  
Come through the prayer, the meditation, praise,  
The weary strengthen and the fallen raise;  
Fit us to meet the challenge of our day,  
As worthy pilgrims of Thy pilgrim way.

We attended early morning service on Good Friday. There was a good attendance. In the evening we went to see Aunt Eliza. It was Dolly Enslin's birthday.

We are sorry to hear that Aunt Emmie has had another "turn" but glad Joyce was with her. It is now 6.30 Tuesday morning. I am expecting great news over the wireless any time now that the war seems about at an end. May it be soon. The loss of life on both sides is terrible.

The holidays will as usual upset postal arrangements. Expect all letters will be late. It is Cecily's birthday. She is spending it at home. We are both keeping pretty well. We miss Grace and Ted. The town has been very quiet all the weekend. Many people are away. Am glad the weather has been so fine.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Today is Uncle Gervase's and Joy Moorcroft's birthdays. In two days time it will be Uncle Owen's. Sunday was Harold and Ruth's wedding anniversary. How time passes. Joe draws attention to the passing of time and says we shall soon be planning for Xmas. He has not given us any further information re the X-ray photos but hope he is improving in health. We assume the christening passed off to the satisfaction of all.

It is Monday afternoon. Mom should be at her W.A. meeting but as she has a very bad night and was coughing and sneezing a good deal, I could not persuade her to stay in bed all day today but she is resting in the spare room. I had a bad cold on Friday, nose running etc. However we were able to go to the station about 9.30 p.m. to see Mrs Birch pass through on her way to Bulawayo.

Olive and her sister, Mildred, arrived from Mildred's farm by the evening train on Thursday and spent the evening on Friday with us. They left by Olive's car for Port Elizabeth on Saturday morning. Both looked very tired. Mildred has had an operation. We may see her on her way home again.

We disposed of the three kittens last week. Mr Muller had one and the man who has been taking grapes to the station for the soldiers took the mother cat and two kittens but the next morning, the mother was back and looking for her babies. We sent her back again but the same thing happened. She would not stay away. It is wonderful how cats find their way about.

Ted is back at his work again in spite of having caught cold on the way home. The pigeons arrived safely and have settled down comfortably. Charles is thrilled. Trevor now wants a pair.

I am trying to sell the pictures and books of Dr Holubs. I have found a firm in Johannesburg who deals in Books on South Africa.

A wire came from Mary on Saturday to Aunt Eliza saying she was arriving on Thursday morning. I expect she will come to us for her mid-day meals or the Poplars. She is welcome to both. Do not know how long she will be staying.

War news continues to be satisfactory – except for the terrible loss of life. It surely cannot be long before it ends.

Am sorry to say Aunt Emmie has had another bad "turn". Fortunately Joyce was with her. She has been trying to make plans to have the family with her during the June holidays but realises that it is quite out of the question for her to attempt the journey to Maritzburg. She was hoping to call here as well. No word has come through regarding Dudley but we all hope he has been released ere this. Arrangements are being made for thanksgiving services as soon as the "cease fire" is sounded. Festivities will have to wait until the men return.

Tuesday morning. Mrs Kissack came along after the Women's meeting yesterday afternoon and thanked Mom for the provisions she had sent for the tea. They had quite a nice meeting, about 16 present. Mrs Karg was not well enough to preside. In the evening, Mrs Saunders, her daughter Florrie and Clifford came about 8. Mom was in bed. Mom was pleased to see them and Florrie and I made tea for them. They are in for the Stock Fair today and shopping. They all seemed well and jolly. We had a little rain whilst they were here and during the night. 15 points. Mr Muller is just putting the finishing touches to the painting of the outside woodwork. It looks nice and fresh and hope it stays so for a long while.

Our garden boy has returned from his visit to his mother. She is still very ill. We sent the maid round to the Premier to fetch our dinner yesterday as Mom was not well enough to face going out.

Ernest is away on holiday at Bushmans River and is expected back very shortly. Jeffrey was up for the weekend but we did not see him. Christine and baby are getting on nicely. Her nurse has left. Mom saw the child bathed a few days ago and pronounces him a bonny boy.

Reg was not well on the wedding anniversary but they had a party for the children. Dot also complains of having a cold and headache but hope they are all well ere this. Norman was home for

the holidays. He has grown and is very thoughtful. He came third in his class. Schools here reopened yesterday. Later. Mom is up and about again but naturally is not up to concert pitch.

I was surprised when I totalled my postage account for March. I know I do write a good many letters and it is often over 10/- for a month but last month it was 19/2d. I do not grudge it by any means. It is no trouble to write letters, my trouble is when people do not answer letters. I have the Church quarterly meeting to attend this evening. Expect a visit from Uncles Jack and Gervase. No more now except lots of love to each and all and hoping you are in good health and spirits.

Yours affectionately,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Good news. Dudley is released and is in England. Joyce had a message last week giving this news and she wired it to Aunt Eliza and me. This was on Thursday. The wire was handed in at Cape Town 9.35 am but I only received it at 3.15 p.m. Then on Saturday, a cable came addressed to Joyce – all her correspondence comes to Cradock direct – from Dudley giving his address in Brighton. What a relief this is to all concerned. Judging by the accounts which have appeared in the papers, the prisoners have had a rough journey from their camps to freedom. It is evident that they will not be immediately sent home as he gives his address, evidently in order that Joyce can now write to him. Some other local men have also cabled their relatives here. Unfortunately nothing has come from either of Uncle Norman's three boys. I wonder what changes will be made now that Dudley will be returning some time. Aunt Emmie has all along been looking forward to his coming back and occupying the small house she is in. I do not know if it will be large enough for all of the family. I am sorry to say that Aunt Emmie has had more "turns" latterly. She has given up all ideas of going to Maritzburg. We must wait and see what happens.

Mary arrived on Thursday morning and is settled in at Market Street. We have her most days at supper. She had dinner at the Poplars. She looks to go to Fish River next Saturday morning and leave there for Graaff Reinet early the following week. We all think she is looking much thinner than when she was here last year. She was sorry not to have seen anything of the Kroonstad family as she came down.

Whilst I think of it, I must ask you to address to us in full as there is another Mr and Mrs Charles Butler in town. Strange to say they are staying at the Premier and were sitting at the same table with us. I think he is working on one of the Municipal schemes. He comes from Johannesburg, she is evidently an Afrikaans girl newly married we think. His hair is a very light shade and plenty of it. A letter addressed to them was delivered to us, it was in a child's writing and I thought it might have been from Norman. It was fortunate for them that it came to us as it was not addressed to the Premier.

Mr Muller has finished the painting job and it looks very nice. Hope it lasts well. He has lots of work to do.

We hear from Uitenhage that Baby Dan behaved splendidly during his christening ceremony. He went to sleep during the first hymn and did not wake until it was all over. Blodwen estimates his weight will be 15 lbs by the time he is three months old. Dorothy's Joan is about that at six months. She is admired by all the admirers, and there are many. Joan was reported as being interested in her feet. Dan is said to be most interested in his hands. Perhaps it may indicate that he is going to be a hard worker and Joan, well, perhaps, a round looper.

On Saturday morning we had a phone message from Lynne saying a RAF visitor was spending the weekend. I could not ascertain if there was any particular significance in it. She also informed me that Rev and Mrs Sorrie were returning to Cradock on Monday. She did not know the reason but no doubt we shall hear in due course. I have since ascertained that arrangements have been made for them to stay at the Victoria Hotel. They have only been away about a month.

The Post Office informs us that an additional mail is being made up for stations north of here from today (Monday) which will save about 12 hours in posting. If we post before three p.m., mails will go by a mixed train as far as Naauwpoort and catch the connexion there with the Cape Train for Bloemfontein, Kroonstad, Johannesburg, etc. I shall try to post by that time and you can let me know if it makes any difference in time of arrival.

Uncle Bertie is in hospital. We hear that appendicitis is threatened.

Mr and Mrs Stock have gone to Humewood for an indefinite period. He has quite recovered from his operation but has not resumed playing bowls.

Evelyn writes that it is very quiet after the children have gone back to school. Uncle Owen is on a visit to Mike and Maude at present. He has taken one of the grandsons up with him.



Dot says Norman has learned to drive the car and they had several trips during the holidays. He weighs 114 lbs and Dot 116. He is 5 ft 8 already.

Evelyn also says that Kingsley and Cecily are growing so fast. They had a good time during the holidays. Her flower garden is still looking lovely.

Tuesday morning. Rev Sorrie has called to see me. He has left Queenstown for good. It will not be of interest to you to know the reasons. He still would like to visit his brother, daughter and son and perhaps way may open in that direction. He is taking service on Sunday here. Perhaps Mr Karg may not be back in time for Sunday in which case he will help out.

Have not heard the result of the consultations with the Drs in Port Elizabeth yet. Uncle Bertie is out of hospital and is staying in bed at Carrington Lodge for a few days. They think it is kidney trouble. Both of us have had nasty colds the last few days but are better again. I did not take my appointment on Sunday. Rev Sorrie speaks very highly of Lynne. She is a very fine girl he says. I will not add more except to say we hope to hear from you all in due course. I have a lot to do today.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

I made a mistake last week in not posting my letter at the Post Office instead of in the pillar box. Hence I do not expect there was any advantage to you. Now I find that the Postmaster finds that such a greater use is being made of the extra train, that the posting time has been advanced to 12 noon instead of 2.30. I do not think I shall ever be ready to post so early but will see. I often wish an improvement could be made in the hour we receive our post. The mails from the South arrive at the station at 7.15 a.m. and from the North at 9.30 a.m. (if the train is running to time). Letters are seldom delivered before 11.30 and often just as we are going to dinner at 12.30.

I posted letters to each of the four grandsons last week. I see there has been renewed fighting on the Italian front and material advances have been made. We pray that all have been spared accidents or damage. We are always anxious for news. David has been moved up into the front lines. We have not heard if any of them have been able to contact the others. When Arthur last wrote, he was on leave and was sleeping in a house with bed and mattress. There was lots of sport. Had played hockey but had not played tennis and was sent to the front. Rex and Arthur had met and found lots to talk about. Was glad to hear that they get news over the wireless which must be very interesting. He says the country is too beautiful for words. David thinks he may be posted to the regiment Arthur is in. We have not heard from Denis lately but Muriel writes that she has met Dorothea in Maritzburg. She was looking to come and see us here and was hoping Denis would be coming back to continue his studies at Rhodes University. We are looking forward to having her here.

You will be interested in hearing that Uncle Gervase's daughter, Barbara, is engaged but have not heard to whom. We hear that Pam's husband has gone back to England. She was not allowed to accompany him. None of the RAFs are allowed to take their wives until after the war is over.

Dudley has sent a couple of cables to Joyce. The last came this (Monday) morning. He was then with a friend of his in the country and of course sends love. Of course there is not word as to when he will be back. Joyce hopes and expects a phone message one of these fine days from the Docks saying he has arrived. He will be sorry to hear of the death of a parrot which has been in the family for over fifty years. It was found dead on the floor of its cage a week or so ago. There was another parrot in the same house when he arrived at the home of a relative. Dudley's was a great talker and so was the other until the arrival of Dudley's when he never spoke until Dudley's died.

We had a call from Mrs Winter who has just been on a visit to Vryburg. She gave us lots of news of old friends there. She was surprised at the number of changes and the great improvements that had been made since she left the town and was very sorry not to have seen Douglas and Evelyn. Douglas is drilling for water on two of his farms and hopes to be successful. No frost has fallen yet either there or here.

Mr Rainier is giving a birthday party on Wednesday afternoon. She has a married sister staying with her. She was looking at one of my scrap books and spotted a picture of a cricket team of eleven all from one family. This happened to be her husband's family. She was quite interested.

Uncle Owen phoned from Rooispruit on Friday evening to enquire how Uncle Bertie was. He had been in hospital a couple of days or so and suffered a good deal of pain. It appears that he had been lifting a heavy log and had evidently overstrained himself. He is better now. We wanted Uncle Owen to stay over here for the weekend but he was in a hurry to get home. He has been on a visit to the family at Vryburg, Johannesburg and Rooispruit.

Dot has sent us snaps of THE baby. We are pleased with it (the snap as well as the baby) and hope to see the actual article one of these days. Snaps of Mike's baby was also good. We have not a snap of Baby Dan.

Mr Radford brought his son along on Saturday evening to say goodbye. He has been down on two months leave. He has been doing YMCA work in Italy and has been in the same camp as John Shingler (Una's husband).

Mary left for Fish River to spend the weekend with Aunt Jessie. She has gone on to Graaff Reinet to spend the rest of her holiday with her Mother.

We had 25 points of rain last night. Autumn tints are great in evidence. Mom as been to her WA meeting this afternoon. It was quite cool. Aunt Kate called here on Saturday. All well at Grass Ridge. They don't come to town more than once a month owing to petrol shortage. War news is good and should soon end now that Russian troops are in Berlin.

Tuesday morning. Cyril Collett came in last evening on his way to fetch Mildred who has been visiting their daughter and the new baby. He has left his lorry with us and looks to be away about ten days. He tells us that Gordon Saunders has sold his farm at a tip top price. War news continues good. We may expect to hear of the fall of Berlin any time. Perhaps tomorrow when the San Francisco Conference opens, it will be announced. I am posting this before 12 noon today.

We are both getting better of our colds. Have not started fires yet but it was pretty cold last night. Hope you are all well. The Germans say they are leaving our P.O.W.s in their camps.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

The year is passing very rapidly. Fancy May already. It really is not May yet as I am writing early on Monday morning, 30<sup>th</sup> April. It is very cold. Winter has come. Last year we had our first fire on April 27<sup>th</sup> this year we are a day later. The 27<sup>th</sup> was the 58<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my leaving London for Sunny South Africa. We have turned the dining room table round across the room as we usually do and have brought in the long settee from the front passage in front of the fire which makes the room nice and cosy. Mom has the round table at the cosy corner and with my table facing the fire instead of my back to it, is also an improvement. Frost fell in some parts of the town but we were two degrees above that.

We have been favoured with a number of letters during the last week. Mary wrote from the train and posted at Rosmead. She had a very interesting time at Fish River. Saw Aunt Agnes and she went to see Mary at Saltpansdrift on Sunday. Saturday they had a picnic by the river with Gladys, Enid and children. On Sunday they went up to Grass Ridge and talked to Uncle Norman and Aunt Gladys over the phone. Mary is now at Vrede with her Mother and sisters. Ted has written suggesting that we return with Mary when she goes back to her job. We are not entertaining it as winter travelling does not appeal to us.

Cyril Collett has gone to fetch Mildred and left his car with us. When they return by train, they will go out the same night to their farm. Cyril says he has not had a holiday for twenty years. He tells us that Gordon Saunders has sold his farm for a good price. Wonder what Gordon is going to do.

I am sorry to report that Aunt Emmie has had four heart attacks recently in three weeks. You will be glad to hear that a letter from Dudley for Joyce arrived on Friday. He has not been at all well and was unable to walk when released from P.O.W. camp so had a lift on a lorry. He had hurt his leg or foot. He also had broken his denture plate. We wonder when he will return. He had been up to London from Brighton and found the city much the same as when he visited it 18 years ago. There will be great rejoicings when he arrives. It is to be hoped the excitement will not be too much for anyone. Aunt Emmie is hoping to have a gathering of her family here if possible in June school holidays. It will be very nice if it can be arranged. We are prepared to entertain as many as possible. Freda, we hear, is already in Uitenhage and is to undergo an "op" there. We hope to see her on her return.

Grace says David is billeted with an Italian family in a three story house. They seem nice people. There are two young children in the home. His host was surprised at his refusing to drink wine. Dot says her new neighbour was a Miss Geldenhuis – now Bekker – from these parts. Baby Joan was seven months old on 22<sup>nd</sup>. Blodwen's baby outweighs hers by almost double her weight. Norman is under treatment in Pretoria for curvature of the spine and she thinks as a result of the treatment, he will soon be alright. He is sorry he cannot play football at present. Joe reports that Uncle Owen is looking very well after his trip up north. He tried wearing Douglas' glasses and found they suited him nicely. He has not got his own new ones yet. It is Beryl's birthday on 3<sup>rd</sup> and I was able to send her a cheque for her claim in Mr Thomas' estate. She has had to wait over a year for it. It will be Dot's birthday next Saturday (5<sup>th</sup>). It was Mrs Rainier's last Wednesday. Mom was invited to the hen convention and they all had a very pleasant afternoon. Her sister is leaving on Friday morning for her home in Northern Transvaal, have forgotten the town. On Friday morning I went to the station to see Dorothea pass through. Mom did not feel equal to go so early in the morning. She recognised me and we enjoyed a few minutes walk and talk on the platform. Of course we are very sorry she was not able to break her journey here. Next time she travels, perhaps Denis will be with her. It will be nice if it should happen so. She has gone back to Maritzburg.

Monday afternoon. A box containing 13 avocado pears arrived this a.m. evidently from Dot but no railway advice or letter is yet to hand. They are evidently over ripe and have not travelled

very well. A few lemons were in the box. Thanks all the same. Will see what we can do with them. Strange to say I was up town this morning and bought one avocado pear in a shop.

Whilst in town, met Roslin who informed me that she had come to see Rev Karg about arranging for Barbara's wedding here in town on May 30<sup>th</sup>. It is to be a quiet affair and no reception. She also told me that Aunt Kate Owen had passed by this morning's train for the north. Do not know if she has gone alone or if Freda is in Uitenhage. Perhaps we shall hear from Joe.

Later still. Christine has just phoned from the Poplars that the box of avocado pears is from Mary at Graaff Reinet and are to be distributed amongst our friends. This shall be done.

Joe writes that he is giving up his poultry as they only get about one egg per week and he wants to grow some vegetables and can't do both poultry and vegetables. Years ago we discovered the same. He would like to try having a Swiss goat. Their milk bill amounts to about £3 per month. Blodwen is averse to goats. They have had a cine show recently in one of the halls in the Location in aid of the funds of their joint Council. They were well received and orderly. Their electric stove has been giving trouble and it is difficult to get spare parts. We had similar trouble. One night we left the hot plate on all night. Fortunately no damage was done except that so much electricity was wasted. Blodwen says baby Dan weighs 16 lbs 2 ozs, puts on about eight per week. Her Dr, Ruth, is passionately fond of baby. Joe is considering having a series of injections as a preventative against colds. He always seems to be troubled with them. Trevor is to have a couple of pigeons from Market Street as soon as they can be caught and sent off.

Harold writes an interesting letter from Johannesburg. He hopes his parents will never have to part with the Plot. He loves his home and supposes he will have one like it some day.

The war news lately has been satisfactory except for the terrible loss of life. The reported offer of an unconditional surrender was cheering but as it excluded Russia, has of course been declined. It has only put off the day and increases the loss of life to no purpose. The shooting of Mussolini and his followers by his own people is far better than it happening by either of the Allies. So far no news has come through of any of the Collett boys having been released.

Tuesday morning May 1<sup>st</sup>. Am disappointed that news has not come over the wireless that peace has been proclaimed. I think it will come before the day is over. Fighting in Italy, it said, was practically finished. That is good news so far as our boys are concerned. They have had it hard the last few weeks.

About 9.30 last evening Cyril and Mildred turned up from their holiday. They left by their lorry before ten and we do not envy them their journey. It must have been very cold. Of course the front part of the lorry is closed in. They were glad to have one of the avocado pears Mary had sent. Mildred says she is much better for the change. They spent some days at Jeffreys Bay. Olive is now in Uitenhage. Did I tell you Roslin told me that Aunt Kate went north by yesterday's train.

One of our Church members who has a nephew in the war and who was wounded in both legs before the fighting in Tobruk and was left on the field of battle, was taken prisoner and sent to Italy and afterwards to Germany. He is now in England. He has sent a cheque for £5 as a thanks offering. Certainly a very good example which no doubt will be followed by others.

It is quite nippy this morning sitting on the back stoep whilst the maid is sweeping the dining room. We are going to the 'bring and buy' sale in aid of the Women's Auxiliary at ten this morning so must not write much more. Will get the eight o'clock news now so, so long.

Lots of love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

I am late in making a start. It is Monday evening. We are waiting for the seven o'clock news in the hopes that the long expected official announcement is to be made that war in Europe has ceased. I hope it will come this evening. I expect those of you who can, have been listening all the afternoon. It certainly cannot be long delayed.

We are sorry to hear that Reg has not been well lately, low temperature, a relapse of an attack of flu. Baby Joan has been vaccinated and in consequence has given them a few disturbed nights. Alan has been troubled for some time with a curvature of his spine and has undergone a course of treatment by violet ray which apparently has done the trick of correcting the error, in other words put him straight. He is looking forward to playing Rugby. It is on the boards that all the family may be coming down but no date is given but Dot has asked us to see what we can do about getting the use of a pram and cot. So that looks like business. I guess we will be able to manage that when we know nearer the time.

We had our first frost on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Kroonstad had theirs on April 29<sup>th</sup>. It has been comparatively mild since. We do not have a fire unless it is really needed.

On Friday morning I took over a pair of pigeons in the cage which Grace took a pair for baby Charles. I sent Trevor a wire saying they had left as I did not want the birds shut up in the Uitenhage station over Sunday. We hope to hear in due course of their safe arrival.

You will be pleased to hear that Joyce has had three letters already from Dudley. On April 14<sup>th</sup>, he wrote that he had been in England four days. He and others – including a pal who has been with him all through his imprisonment – were flown from where they were released to England. They started in the evening and had a glorious trip over. His feet got frost bitten in Germany and they have to be dressed daily.

Stop Press. 8 p.m. News just received by air that Churchill will make the official announcement at 3 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday) and the King will speak to the nation at 9 p.m. My flags go up in the morning. The Mayor is having a service in the Town Hall at 3.30 and service in our church at 7.30. Next Sunday there will be a public service at 3 in the Town Hall and different churches will hold their own services.

Now to resume the story about Dudley. They are billeted in a private house and have beds to sleep in. Everything is being done to make them as happy and comfortable as possible. Unfortunately he broke the bottom dental plate which naturally has not improved his digestion. He says he does not want to see crowds but longs for quiet and rest. He has already put on ten lbs in weight and he says he has another twenty pounds to make up. He hoped to discard his walking stick as his feet got better. He has been inoculated etc. before being sent back. Some time will have elapsed before he leaves. He expects to return by air as far as Pretoria and then train to Cape Town. He considers all Germans between the ages of 14 and 40 should be treated as mad dogs which they are he says. It is now ten p.m. and to bed.

Tuesday 6.15 a.m. It was announced last night that today is to be observed as Victory Day in Europe. Tomorrow is to be a public holiday and Thursday, being Ascension Day, is another public holiday so I guess all postal arrangements will be completely disorganised. However I will post as usual and hope for the best. It is most likely we will go to Fish River Fete with Mrs Hartman who is coming in from her farm on Wednesday afternoon and will sleep here so as to get off in good time. This will save us going out by mixed goods train on Wednesday afternoon. I am hoping the monumental mason who lives right opposite will be able to take out the Rockland and Convent girls who belong to Fish River in his lorry.

Mom has been troubled with a rash for some time and as it did not yield to treatment, got Dr Scholtz down last Sunday week and he prescribed a lotion. It is slowly getting better. Aunt Jessie has been troubled the same way. Uncle Bertie's May is in hospital here and underwent a major "op" yesterday. She is progressing satisfactorily up to last evening.

Our Sunday School anniversary services on Sunday were very well attended and the collections beat all records, over £17 for the day. We are of course hoping that all our boys will be brought home quickly but possibly they may be detained for garrison duty in Germany. Uncle Norman and Jack have not heard of their boys for a long time.

Uncle Gervase's Barbara is to be married here on 30<sup>th</sup>. All their three daughters will thus be married. He wants to sell his farm.

Goodbye everybody for this week, will try to do better next time. Let us all be very thankful for peace and may there never be another war is our prayer. It is just on 7 am so love to all and hoping to hear good news from each home soon.

Dad

Mary returns to her duties at the end of this week.

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday May 16<sup>th</sup> 1945

My dear All,

I am late in starting again but the reason is that we had a most unexpected, but very agreeable, surprise yesterday morning. I was busy as usual writing up my books before breakfast when about 7.30, the door opened and there was Trevor standing at my side. Joe followed. They had just come off the train on their way to Vryburg. They broke their journey here so as to arrive at Pudimoe in daylight instead of about the middle of the night – an inconvenient time for those meeting the train and those getting off it. It gave us the pleasure of having them with us for the day. Joe has got a month's leave – sick leave – and is going to spend it with Eric and Freda for the first part of the time and then with Douglas and Evelyn. As you know, he has been in indifferent health for some time and the change to the country will, we all hope, do him a lot of good. He is due back at his job on June 14<sup>th</sup> but he looks to break the journey here again on his way back. Of course Mom was as greatly surprised when he took her breakfast in bed. During the morning, they went to see Aunt Eliza and thanked her for the pair of pigeons she had given Trevor. Freda returned home last Tuesday but we did not know she was passing through so did not go to the station. She and Eric are alone on their farm as all the children are at boarding school. Joe will try to see them and Kingsley and Cecily in Kimberley as he will have all Tuesday afternoon and evening in Kimberley.

Mary has now returned to Sibasa after having a good holiday here and at Graaff Reinet and Johannesburg. Am glad to say that Aunt Letty is keeping very well.

We are pleased to hear that the Kroonstad Sunday School anniversary was a success. Jean contributed a solo at one of the services. Pam was awarded a prize at the Sunday School here which I have posted on to her.

Dot had quite a number of letters etc. on her birthday. Alan has a birthday this week. They are all getting on in years.

Ruth had an interesting article in a recent Outspan on women's sphere of work in the home. Quite good reading. By the way, her address from June 1<sup>st</sup> will be 4 Worcester Street, Grahamstown. Make a note of it in your address books or on your pad. We had an interesting letter from Denis too last week. He anticipated an early stoppage of hostilities which materialised soon after he had posted. He says whilst the guns were blazing, he noticed nightingales singing, also the cuckoo and larks. What a contrast to the devastation that was going on. David also remarked on the singing of the birds. I was hoping that the four grandsons might be able to meet somewhere in Italy but it has not been possible so far. Now that the fighting in Italy is finished, we hope that all will be able to return to their homes shortly. You will be glad to know that Uncle Norman has at last had news from Neville and Godfrey that they are safe in England. The other they hope is safe. Uncle Jack's son, Hilton, is also safe. This news came after the Fish River Fete. We had a perfect day for the Fete. Perfect weather, a good crowd and a very happy crowd of people. The financial result, contrary to expectation, was a record. Just over £365 has come in. The transport arrangements were difficult but we got there and back quite safely. The day following the Fete was such a contrast, cold and miserable. The peace celebrations passed off without much fuss. The delayed official announcement of the cease fire made it impossible to make any definite plans for public functions. A service was held in and outside the Town Hall half an hour after the announcement on Tuesday and again on Sunday afternoon. Each church held its own services in the morning and evening. (The collection in the Methodist church was over £15 for the day.)

The next excitement will be Uncle Gervase's daughter, Barbara's, wedding on 30<sup>th</sup>. Aunt Kate Owen has been up north with Thera and I think she is now in Vryburg district. She and Uncle Owen will meet here for the wedding and spend a few days with us. Freda was staying with Beryl whilst her mother was away.

Baby Dan is growing so fast that Dr has put him on short rations. He weighs 16¾ lbs at four months. Blodwen is still troubled with sties. Can anyone suggest a cure?

Douglas says when the boys come home, he will be able to visit us again. We shall be pleased. He was under examination at some meeting regarding cold storage for Vryburg for 2½



hours recently. He is fighting hard for the interests of the district. Evelyn is always busy with her beautiful garden (which we have not seen yet). Dot still talks of coming down. Reg was better when she wrote. Wonder if she could arrange to be here when Joe is here. Grace was amused, we also, at Baby Charles. He contracted chicken pox just before the Sunday School anniversary and was so glad because it prevented him from sitting up on the platform with the other children. He hopes that next year he will have whooping cough so that he will not be able to sit on the platform then. I should have mentioned that Jean's solo was 586 in the Methodist hymn book, Stay Master.

Tuesday afternoon. Gladys's Norman phoned this a.m. that all three of her boys are now safe. How thankful we are. Later from Aunt Emmie enclosed extracts from a recent letter from Dudley to Joyce saying how much better he was from his rest at Malvern as the guest of a relative there. As his friend had other visitors, Dudley was sleeping at a neighbour's house. This lady, a widow, was so overcome that she literally fell on his neck and kissed him. Nothing is too much trouble for them to do for POWs. He is hoping he may be back in South Africa by the end of May.

No room for any more so goodbye.

Love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is Monday afternoon, we had nearly half an inch of rain during the night and yesterday was very cold and uncomfortable with practically no sunshine. The rain is welcome. Mom did not venture out last evening for service as it was too cold. We have just had airmail letters from Rex and David, both written on 10<sup>th</sup>, rejoicing in the fact that fighting had ceased and hoping to be back in a few months time. May their hopes be realised. We may be, and no doubt are, devoutly thankful that as a family, all our loved ones, both in South Africa and overseas, have been mercifully spared to us.

Now for a few items of news in brief! Christine's baby was christened in the Anglican Church yesterday. May, Uncle Bertie's eldest daughter, has recently undergone a major operation in the local hospital and has made a good recovery. She expects to go home this week. Aunt Charlotte had a fall at the old ladies home. She is very blind and her chair was not in its usual place. She is up and about as usual. We have not heard from Joe of his arrival at Eric's but heard that Eric had gone to meet him. Joyce received a cable from Dudley asking them to listen in on Wednesday (I think) but we got the news a day later so of course did not hear him speak. From Cape Town we hear that the reception was good. Aunt Emmie was too deaf to hear him. No word has come through as to when he is likely to arrive in South Africa. Gladys was looking to come for a holiday to Aunt Eliza but owing to her servant having to go to hospital and the uncertainty regarding Dudley's arrival, she will probably put off her visit. I expect you notice that I am using new carbon paper. It is difficult to get as good a quality as formerly and one has to make it last as long as possible.

Grace writes that she has been suffering from headaches for some time. I wonder if her eyes are needing attention. Charles was not able to go to their Sunday School picnic. Canon Gould, who was minister here for some years and is now at Kroonstad, conducted the thanksgiving service there. It must have been painful for him as he lost his two sons in the war. My attention was drawn to the name of Lt R.A. Briggs amongst soldiers landed in England so I sent a reply-paid wire to our former minister asking if it was his son who was reported missing many months ago. His reply was "unfortunately no". I understand that all the Fish River boys who were captured at Tobruk have now been accounted for as having arrived back in England. Uncle Gervase's daughter, Barbara, the eldest, is to be married here on 30<sup>th</sup>. Why did she not choose the day before which is her birthday? I published the banns yesterday. Lynne says Rex has been away at the war for 3½ years. Her boss, who also has a son in the war, has promised her a special holiday when the boys come home. They raised a £1000 in Queenstown during the peace celebrations for war funds and Red Cross. Arthur also wrote just before "cease fire" sounded. She will try to come over to see us before she goes home. My old paper reports the death of Reg Geard. He and Douglas were as David and Jonathan in their school days in Vryburg.

I have spent a good deal of time recently in going through old correspondence and destroying some. Amongst some papers, I find a record that Grace played the organ in the congregational Church for the first time on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918. I wonder if she remembers it. The following lines, which I believe were composed by my Mother, are worth keeping:

My Father I thank Thee for sleep,  
For quiet and peaceful rest,  
I thank Thee for stooping to keep  
An infant from being distressed.  
Oh how can a poor little creature repay  
Thy fatherly kindness by night and by day?  
My voice would be lisping Thy praise  
My heart will repay Thee with love,  
Oh teach me to walk in Thy ways  
And fit me to see Thee above

That when all the days of my life shall have passed,  
I may worship Thee better in Heaven at last.

Mom is attending her women's meeting whilst I am typing. Am glad to say the rash which was troubling her for some time has disappeared. Both of us have had colds but they are no worse. We use the electric heater in the dining room in the evening when we do not have a fire and then shift the heater into our bedroom shortly before retiring. We have no definite word as to when Dot and family will be coming down. It would be cold travelling in this weather. Have not secured a cot or pram yet. Am still keeping busy with odd jobs and etc.

This will do for this afternoon and will see if any letters come in the morning. Aunt Eliza is having a small headstone erected on Mr Thomas' grave.

Alison is going to her daughter, Dorothy Murray, on Saturday and will be away for a few weeks. Mom is invited to morning tea at the Poplars on Wednesday. A Mr Todd, not Dodd, attempted to commit suicide last week on the farm. Mr Mahon and other neighbours brought him into the hospital about five a.m. He is recovering. We do not see the Dodds very often owing to petrol restrictions. They are all well when last I heard.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

During last week, we experienced one of the coldest weeks for a very long time, not that the thermometer was excessively low, in fact we did not have frost but the wind was very strong and was blowing off snow. Johannesburg and other parts had heavy falls – some places as much as eight inches – and this made things very unpleasant. We also had some rain, a little over an inch extended over four days. It was cold. Some Scots staying at the Premier said they had never felt such cold in their dear Highland homes. Unfortunately the cold and rain fell on the Sunday School picnic day so instead of going to the Show Ground for their outing, they had to be contented with games in the school room and were taken to the bio in the afternoon. Needless to say they enjoyed the good things provided for them. This is the first Sunday School picnic we have missed for years. We did not go out of the house more than we could help. The Uitenhage Sunday School picnic was marred by some of the sandwiches having gone bad and upsetting a number of scholars and others.

I had a letter from Sidney Geard saying his brother, Reg, died at Kokstad. He had heart trouble with kidney and liver complications. He had only one son aged 15. Douglas and Reg were great pals, in fact we used to call them David and Jonathan. I am writing to his widow.

We have had a couple of postcards and a letter from Joe. He last wrote from Douglas' and was finding the rest and quietness beneficial. It seems that the education of the children would be a great difficulty should he decide to attempt farming anywhere. He looks to break his journey here on June 11<sup>th</sup> and go on the next day home. I do hope the change will have done him permanent good. Blodwen has had someone in to sleep whilst he has been away. Baby Dan is growing so fast that Dr is reducing his feed. He weighs 18 lbs and is only four months old. "Some baby" the Americans would say.

It is Monday afternoon 28<sup>th</sup>. Yesterday was the 58<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my arrival in Cradock. Lots of things have happened since then.

You will be glad to know that Dudley Townshend arrived in Cape Town last Wednesday morning after flying to Pretoria and then by train. We have not heard any particulars regarding the reception or news of future plans. Aunt Eliza is hoping that he and Joyce will come here as soon as possible. Gladys has given up the idea of coming owing to servant troubles. I understand that Dudley has to put in six months service after he arrives with his former boss – Cape Times Ltd – but expect he will have a holiday before that. We would have wired our congratulations but as we only got the news from Market Street at dinner time on Tuesday, and the Post Office is closed between 1 and 2 and they could not be sure that the wire would be delivered until Friday, as Thursday was a holiday, we wrote instead. We hope he will soon be quite fit after the dreadful past.

Dot refers to the family of Haldane that is farming about 25 miles west of Potgietersrus. Their daughter married Major Ewert Collett's son, David. Very nice people. Dot also tells of the festivities at Potgietersrus over the declaration of peace. Their local Council gave four beast for slaughtering for the Natives in the Location, also ten loads of wood for the fires. Some gift. So far as I know, our Council has not done anything in the way of celebrating. Let me say here that I did not see anyone drunk during the holidays. Dot is amused at baby Jean sucking oranges whilst sitting on the floor. I guess she watches that she does not get the pip! Next Monday will be the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dudley and Joyce. May they be spared to each other for many years to come.

On Wednesday afternoon, we are to attend the marriage of Uncle Gervase's eldest daughter, Barbara, here. The reception is to be at the Victoria Hotel. We look to attend. A card from Aunt Kate Owen says she will come to us to sleep tomorrow night from Redlands. Uncle Owen is also coming but has not said when.

A letter from Evelyn says she has never known such cold weather for May as what they experienced last week. They have had heavy frosts and her garden has suffered considerably. Trevor is very happy walking around with Joe. They got a buck and guinea fowl recently. Little Robert Short came out from Vryburg on Saturday and has developed mumps. They are keeping Trevor away from contact and Kingsley and Cecily will be home in about three weeks for the

holidays. Of course they are hoping that Arthur and Rex may be back from Italy by then but there are many soldiers who have been there longer than them. Rex was up there I think before Arthur. A Vryburg lady has just heard of the safe arrival in England of her three sons who were captured with others at Tobruk. They are so glad to hear of Fish River boys' safety. David says he has been allowed leave and has visited Como and Lecco near the Swiss border. They hired a boat and enjoyed the scenery. The weather was getting warmer. His opinion is that the Italian women are the backbone of the land.

Tuesday morning. Uncle Owen did not turn up last evening. We had a good fire going for him and waited till ten. Perhaps he will come tonight. Was ready for him this a.m. but he has not come. I have to be at the dentist at nine to have another tooth added to my bottom plate, so shall not have time for another sheet but may try later today.

After dinner, Tuesday. Have to go to the dentist at five when I hope to be finished with him. Aunt Eliza has sent down three sheets of letters from Aunt Emmie telling of Dudley's arrival last Wednesday. She did not go to the station but waited for him at home. Raymond recognised him before Dudley saw him. He was only five when Dudley left. He is looking very well, his frost bitten feet are not quite right yet. He has a slight nasal trouble which may need an operation later on. He has two months leave before resuming work. An official from the Cape Times was on his train and another at the station with other friends and relatives to give him a welcome. Ladies with their cars drove the men to their homes. Aunt Emmie had a "welcome home" flag hung by Tom from the stoep. The flag was specially worked by an artist at Tom's business. They do not think of coming up country until the weather is warmer, it is very cold and wet there at present. They thank all friends for their welcome and Douglas for his invitation to Vryburg. They have not made any plans for the future yet. They probably will not make any move before the school holidays. They are having their meals sent in from a nearby boarding house. Dudley says he only received one of Joyce's parcels all through the war. One parcel she sent I believe cost her about £15. I wonder where all the others went. He speaks in loud praise of the Red Cross parcels and does not know how they would have fared without them. They are all living together at Aunt Emmie's cottage but other plans will be made later.

I think I have told you Joe has been at Douglas' for about a week and is back at Eric's now. Expect we shall hear more definite news this evening when Aunt Kate Owen arrives as she has been there recently. Although it is so cold, our Jacaranda has not lost its leaves yet nor has our birdbath been frozen. It is the wind blowing off snow that makes it so cold. We use the electric heater during part of the day in the dining room and then take it into our bedroom before we retire. Of course we have a fire in the dining room sometimes.

Aunt Eliza has sent me a correction of the beautiful prayer I quoted in last week's letter. The last two lines there quoted were misplaced and these two should be substituted:

For Jesus said "let little children come night";  
And He will not despise such an infant as I.

This verse should be added,

As long as Thou see-est it right  
That here upon earth I should stay,  
I pray Thee to guard me by night  
And help me to serve Thee by day;  
That when all the days of my life shall have passed  
I may worship Thee better in heaven at last.

### **An Evening Prayer**

Lord, I have passed another day  
And come to thank Thee for Thy care;  
Forgive my faults in work and play  
And listen to my evening prayer.  
Thy favour gives me daily bread,  
And friends, who all my wants supply;  
And safely now I lay my head,  
Preserved and guarded by Thine eye.  
Look down in pity and forgive  
What ere I've said and done amiss;  
And help me every day I live,  
To serve Thee better than on this.  
Now while I speak, be pleased to take  
A helpless child beneath Thy care;  
And condescend for Jesus sake  
To listen to my evening prayer.

This hymn was not composed by my mother but Aunt Eliza has copied it from a little book of verses published in 1846. Practically 100 years ago. The words still hold good.

It is nearly three p.m. now and I must finish my post and if possible, get a few minutes rest. Have been busy since 6 a.m.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

There has been a good deal happening during the week and if I want to record all, I must get a move on. It is now 7 a.m. The sun does not shine into the kitchen before about 7.45 and the maid comes about that time. Early coffee is always ready for her and breakfast is ready by then.

Here are the headlines of the news. Uncle Norman's son, Keith, has arrived at Katkop. The other two boys are reported to be on the water. Barbara Collett was married on Wednesday. Mary is leaving her position as Matron at the end of the month. Aunt Letty has gone to Louisvale. Mary will be going to her in August. She will attend Friends General Meeting in Johannesburg in August. Uncle Bertie was 74 on Sunday. Joe and Roy will be here on Tuesday evening 11<sup>th</sup>. Nothing decided about his future plans. Aunt Kate Owen spent a couple of days with us. We have had a sharp spell of frosts. Now for more details.

News was received early in the week that Keith was coming by air from England. It took him just four days and he arrived at Pretoria on Wednesday and at Fish River Friday about 8.30 p.m. Saturday he came to town with Dick to fetch Ethline. Mom and I were resting on the lawn in the sunshine and they caught us napping. Keith has grown a lot and looks remarkably well. He was very jolly and is most interesting to talk to. He saw his brothers in Brighton and they are supposed to be on the water by now. What rejoicings there will be when all are together. Uncle Jack's Hilton is also coming by sea. It took Keith about seven weeks to walk from the camp where the Americans released them to the coast, doing about 15 miles a day. They would not stay long as they were going to the bio. They had dinner at Ernest's. Alison is up with Dorothy Murray on holiday which she well deserves. Christine is looking after her Dad and has her bridesmaid with her for company. Baby is getting on first rate. Ernest is busy making a nice cot for the child. Aunt Kate arrived on Tuesday evening and stayed till Friday morning. We were sorry Uncle Owen did not come but he stayed with Beryl. Aunt Kate has been to Johannesburg to see Mrs Mahon and also to Vryburg to see Maude and Freda. Of course she also saw Douglas and Joe, who we were pleased to hear was looking better. We have not heard of any fresh plans for his future but no doubt we shall when he arrives next Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> on his way back to Uitenhage. I wonder how he has stood the cold. We have experienced frosts ranging from four to eight degrees. The wind has been so cold, evidently blowing off snow which has fallen in some places. It has been very nice in the sun but cold away from it.

There was a nice gathering of Uncles and Aunts at Barbara's wedding in the Methodist Church on Wednesday afternoon. Aunt Jessie, Kate Dudley and Dudley?, Enid and Gladys Colling, George and Hilda, Mrs Wesley Collett and her son, Bryan, and others. Uncle Gervase gave her away and of course Aunt Rouena and Roslyn and Pam. Hope was flower girl. Pam was bridesmaid and Brian best man. There was a nice show of flowers in the church. Of course the bride was suitably attired but not in a white wedding dress. I could not help thinking she would feel uncomfortable when sitting down with a close row of buttons from her neck to her waist but I expect I am wrong. One side of her face was hidden by her hat but no doubt that was the correct style. She looked very sweet and radiantly happy. The groom, Fynne, was in military uniform. He seems a very nice man. He is a sugar planter in Natal in civil life. The toast was proposed by Mr Cookson and nicely replied to. Rev and Mrs Karg were there at the reception which was given in the Victoria Hotel. He does not attend as a rule when intoxicants are drunk. I was sorry to see that champagne was used by some for the only toast. The eats were very dainty, mostly savouries. A novelty was a bowl of mayonnaise surrounded with small sticks about twice the length of a match with a small piece of crayfish on the end. This you dipped into the bowl and ate. Everyone was very sociable, the bride and groom went to see Aunt Eliza as we were so near. Mom went straight home. Must stop now – 8.30 for breakfast.

Later. Aunt Kate was anxious to get home as she had been away for just a month. She left by the day train on Friday morning. The last we heard about Uncle Owen was that he had not got

his second pair of glasses but he may have them by now. He tried Douglas' when he was in Vryburg and they suited him exactly.

Mary has surprised us by informing us that she is leaving the Donald Fraser Hospital at the end of this month. I understand the Hospital has engaged the services of a fully qualified lady doctor as the work is growing so much. What Mary's plans for the future are we do not know except that she is going to visit Miss Warner, a Friend, who is on some Swiss Mission Station in those parts. She may also pay Reg and Dot a visit on her way south and also possibly Dorothy Murray at Marble Arch, not far from Pienaars River on the line from Potgietersrus to Pretoria. She also will attend the Friends General Meeting in Johannesburg at the August Bank Holiday weekend. From there she intends going to Aunt Letty at Louisvale. Perhaps she might be persuaded to break her journey at Kroonstad if so desired.

My typewriter seems to have gone off the line at the bottom of page one. Must try to find out what is the matter. I notice that when I get near the end of the page, it does not seem to catch properly. Perhaps having ten sheets of white paper and nine carbon sheets, it may be too much.

... Spelmanskop. The reason being that their daughter, who married Martin Luther Coetzee, has decided to remove to South West Arica to try their hand at farming there. Two of their sons are already there. This was their last Sunday together. You will be glad to hear that May, who underwent a major "op" here in hospital some few weeks ago, is back home on the farm and is able to get about a bit. Aunt Jessie had her right hand bandaged up when here for the wedding. Whilst she was gathering eggs, she fell and in putting out her hand to save herself, must have pressed on a thorn or something which has caused her much pain. Enid has been doing what she can for her. Of course she does not want to see a doctor, which I think she should do.

Recently we have had airmail letters from Arthur and David. They are all anxious to get home as soon as possible. They are having excursions to the places of interest. Both refer to having been at the Swiss border but evidently did not meet. From newspaper reports, it appears that it will take some months before they can get their turn. They both speak of the beautiful scenery at Rome.

Baby Charles had a wet experience recently. He went with Grace to see what the servants were doing at the stable. The calves were there and in trying to avoid one, got pushed over into a bath of water. Dot's Norman was home for the long weekend. He is getting on well at school and plays rugby. Alan wants to go too so as to share in the sports. Dot still talks of coming to see us and they are trying to get permits for sufficient petrol for the journey. If this cannot be managed, it is possible Dot and baby will come here by train and Reg and the boys go to his home, also by train. This evidently would be in the school holidays and I do not know exactly when that will be. The Transvaal has different time for holidays to what we have in the Cape.

There is no definite news from Cape Town as to what Dudley and Joyce are going to do. He has two months leave and at least one month must have expired by now. There is talk of their going to Eric and Freda first and here afterwards. He has to put in six months service at the Cape Times before he can do anything else. I understand he is better of his frostbites but is still under military hospital treatment for something else.

I have been doing a lot of sorting out of papers, letters etc. And I feel that my different hobbies are getting straighter than they have been for years. I still have a big job in front of me. As you know, I have been very interested in rainfall records. Recently Mom and I went to visit the Gaoler, who keeps the official records. His wife does the actual recording. Amongst a lot of papers belonging to Uncle James bearing on this subject, were duplications of records which I had made. I offered these to him but he suggested that the Irrigation Department might like to have them. So I consulted the O.C. and he is going to have them later on. My records are on ordinary writing paper and will not last much more handling so he has given me some linen cloth such as architects use. So I am going to make a fresh copy with India ink which will be permanent. Then I will mount it on a spring blind roller so that it will be kept clean and can always be added to as the years roll by. I have asked the Town Clerk if he will accept it when I am gone and keep it up to date. It will be a



most valuable record. Up to now, it contains 67 years record. It may interest you to know that the average for the 67 years is 13.70 inches.

Mary has asked me to sell her electric toaster and heater, also a couple of collapsible book shelves for which she has not further use, apparently. I am also going to sell some of my tools as I do very little in the carpentering line. I have been in dentist's hands and am now set up with a new tooth to replace the one extracted some time ago. I still have some of my own.

Mom has her W.A. meeting to attend this afternoon. It is quite a nice day after the sharp frost of this morning. There was a very poor attendance at service last night owing to the cold weather.

Later. There are no letters from anyone today so I have nothing to answer. So I will not write more this week as I think I have given you enough to talk for and post.

Love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Monday afternoon and I am only now able to begin. We are expecting Joe and Trevor this evening. A card from him this a.m. says he expected to leave Eric Sunday night and I found out that his train would have about six hours wait at that most unattractive station Naauwpoort. So I phoned to the Station Master there to try and get him to come down by a goods train arriving here about seven instead of 10.30 tonight. I hope he does, as Naauwpoort is one of the coldest stations in the Union. He says he is better for the holiday but wants me to make an appointment for Dr Scholtz to see him tomorrow. I also want to see the Dr so will try to do both at the same time. My trouble is that for some time past I have felt that my mouth was too full. My gums seem to get in the way of my teeth. As I have been in dentist's hands lately, I asked him to have a look at the cause. He at once said that glands which control the saliva on the upper gums were not functioning properly and were letting the saliva flow far too quickly. Frequently in speaking or reading, I have to stop to swallow. He says a Dr can remedy this defect. Must wait and see. I may say that the tooth which was extracted some weeks ago has been replaced by a new one and is acting satisfactorily.

The news of the week is that Aunt Letty, accompanied by Josie, has gone to Louisvale by train. It was a sudden decision and they left Graaff Reinet in a snow storm and she enjoyed watching it from the compartment. At Naauwpoort, Josie phoned Aunt Rosa and they waved to each other as they passed Dwaal Station. Mary is looking to bring her mother back to Graaff Reinet some time in August. We shall not be surprised if she turns up in Cradock to see Christine's baby. We hope Mary may visit our Dorothy and Grace on her journey southwards.

Ted sent us a postcard saying David would be on the air on Sunday afternoon between 2 and 3. Of course we listened in and his was the 11<sup>th</sup> message. It came over quite clearly. He did not forget to wish his little brother Charles many happy returns of his birthday (22<sup>nd</sup>). It is Arthur's birthday the same day. It would be interesting to know when David gave the message as for two or three weeks there have not been any messages broadcast. It was Trevor and Rex' birthdays. We did not forget them.

A letter from Evelyn today says Joe has been doing a few odd jobs for her about the house which have been a great comfort to her. She does not think he has put on weight but looks better for the change. Douglas writes that Rex should be the first to return but they do not expect to be home before August. Rex has been motoring the O.C. about so has had excellent opportunities for seeing the country. The two brothers have not met each other again. Evelyn says her sister's son was on the air recently and gave an account of his flight over Hitler's hideout in the mountains. We did not hear it but no doubt it was very interesting.

Baby Charles has been on horseback and is very proud that he can canter. He had to stop when he got a pain! Trevor has also been on a horse at Douglas' but was satisfied to be led about. Now he wants a white horse when he gets home. Grace tells of Jean sitting for more exams. She and Dot's Norman are the same weight (114 lbs) and 5 ft. 5½ tall. Norman is a little taller. Mom was only 103 lbs when married. Harold was home for a weekend recently. He wants fret saws for teaching his Sunday School boys during the week, quite a good idea. Ernest thinks he can let me have some. They are not obtainable in any of the shops. Reg has not been able so far to get extra petrol for their contemplated trip here. Norman's back has again given trouble and Reg is also suffering in that quarter. Baby has been injected for diphtheria and whooping cough. Hope results will be satisfactory.

Last week Mom was invited to three teas, she is getting quite gay. She is none the worse I am glad to say.

When we went to see the Gaoler about rainfall returns, I did not mention that we were shown over the gaol. We went into some of the cells which were spotlessly clean. Each prisoner has three blankets – two in summer – a mat on the floor and suitable clothing. Electric light in the cells to 8 p.m. I did not envy the guard who has eight hour shifts on duty in the prison yard at night.

He is not allowed to sit down during that time nor may he open any cell. If there is any disturbance, he has to ring up the warder. The prison here is also a chronic sick hospital for prisoners from all over the Union. No TB cases are sent here. The gaoler's wife told us that since she has been here, four babies have been born in the prison.

Tuesday morning, 12<sup>th</sup>. Joe and Trevor arrived by goods train about 7 last evening. He just had time to catch it at Naauwport so it saved the wait of six hours there. We had finished our supper but everything was ready for them. Of course it was not very comfortable in the guard's van but it was a fast train and they got here before schedule time. A nice fire awaited them and supper was soon ready. You all will be anxious to know how he looks after his month's sick leave and if he has made any plans for the future. He thinks he has put on a little weight but not much. Everyone has been most kind to him. Douglas took him about a good deal, looking for suitable farms but nothing suitable was found at a reasonable distance or price. All farmers seem to be heavily stocked and cannot accommodate or run stock for Joe. He would like to put a few hundred pounds into stock and let them increase. Various suggestions have been made that he should take up market gardening on similar lines to what Uncle Owen and Beryl are doing in Uitenhage. Poultry farming could also be included. We understand that it has been a good profitable business but Joe does not seem to take to the idea very much. We are going to see Dr Scholtz presently and shall hear what he has to say. Trevor has been a good boy and is looking very well. It has been nice hearing of one and another of the relations. Joe is struck with the great advances Vryburg has made. On Fridays he says the amount of business done in the town must be enormous, customers standing in queues and difficult to be served. There seems to be any amount of money about. He saw quite a number of friends of our former days and does not think I should recognise the place. Some day I hope to see it for myself.

Douglas and Evelyn of course miss the children and hoping that the boys may soon be home again. School holidays will soon be round again and when Kingsley and Cecily will be home. Eric and Freda are all alone as the children are at boarding school. They seem to be getting on nicely. Joe also saw the Hudsons. Servants are a problem up there.

Later. Joe and I went to consult Dr Scholtz about 11 am. He gave Joe a good overhauling such as he has never had before. He thinks there may be some nasal trouble and recommends his going to Dr Lane or Bekker for further advice. He thinks his Railway Dr is premature in suggesting that he should resign from the Railway and has given him a prescription which he hopes may relieve him of the excessive fatigue which he suffers from. He suggests that perhaps the climatic conditions of Uitenhage are less favourable than a higher altitude would be. Joe will have to see when he gets back what is best to be done. In any case, we sincerely hope that his condition will improve and that way will open to his advantage. He is now going to see Aunt Eliza as she wants him to see to a couple of jobs for her. They leave by train tonight at 10.30 and I hope they will find all well on their return home.

I might say Joe phoned to Lynne last evening to convey messages from her parents. She was very pleased to hear Joe and says she hopes to come and see us before she goes home when the boys return. Please forgive all mistakes as I have had many interruptions.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Monday afternoon. Yesterday (17<sup>th</sup>) was the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of my brother James' death and last Wednesday (13<sup>th</sup>) was the 8<sup>th</sup> since Uncle Herbert passed away. These reminders tell of the quick passage of the years. "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom". Last week was Rex and Trevor's birthdays and now on 22<sup>nd</sup> it will be Arthur's and baby Charles. It is to be hoped that both Douglas' sons will be home a long time before their next anniversaries.

Last week I think I referred to the arrival of the boat with 2000 South African POWs on board. This week it is a pleasure to refer to the arrival home of Neville and Hilton. They got out at Fish River of course and had a grand reception. Uncle Norman was not well enough to go to the station but most of the clan were there from the surrounding farms, including Aunt Agnes who very seldom goes out in the evenings. There was a big crowd at the station here. I wanted to go but Mom thought it best not to so I reluctantly stayed at home. I was there officially as Mayor to see them go North and wanted to welcome them back. However there was not time or opportunity for any speeches, they were all too anxious to get to their homes.

On Friday afternoon, Neville, Nancy and Dick came to see us and we were pleased to see Neville looking so well. He has grown taller as well as "sideways". He was very quiet, which seems to be characteristic of all POWs. Nancy was, as might be expected, radiantly happy. Miss Booth and a sailor visitor were here at the same time getting some of Aunt Jessie's eggs but they soon withdrew. Then Aunt Rouena, Uncle Gervase and Pam came. They had all come in for a Red Cross dance in the Town Hall that evening. Uncle Gervase, Aunt Rouena and Pam all stayed to supper with us and dressed for the ball after. Neville, Nancy and Dick went to supper at The Poplars. This was Pam's last evening as she had received a wire to proceed on Saturday morning to Cape Town to join the ship for England. So it was quite an important evening for her. Barbara and her husband are at Fish River. He returns to duty at Durban whilst Barbara stays a while longer at Orchards.

I had been to Dr Scholtz as arranged on Tuesday morning but he had been called out to Bedford so a fresh appointment was made for Thursday afternoon. He examined my mouth but could not find much wrong about the saliva which has been troubling me for some time. He says my few remaining teeth do not appear to be much good as they may be the cause of any trouble so I suppose they will have to come out sooner or later. He gave me a powder for washing and gargling and perhaps that may do some good. Strange to say, on Friday my voice had practically left me and it was difficult to talk to our visitors. It was much the same all day Saturday but is getting better today.

The next excitement will be the coming of Dudley and Joyce. They left Cape Town on Friday evening for Vryburg where they will stay with Eric and Freda. Douglas wired them to bring some cartridges if they want to have some shooting. Dudley's cousin, Metcalfe, who farms next to Douglas has also wired extending an invitation to his farm. Aunt Eliza is busy getting rooms ready for them and thinks they may be here by the end of the week. Ray is to have Mr Thomas' room. We have also asked them to give us some of their time. We have plenty of room and are entitled to their company as much as anyone else. I knew Dudley's father before any of the family. I am sorry for them if they went right through to Pudimoe as the train is due there about 2 am. It can be bitterly cold at that hour. They could have spent one night in Kimberley and gone on by the morning train.

After service on Sunday morning, we had the pleasure of meeting old friends from Observatory church, Mr and Mrs West. They have let their house there for six months and have come here partly for his health. We hope to see a good deal of them. They are staying at the Victoria Hotel. We shall hear a lot about our friends at Observatory. Mrs West is related to Rev Jack Cook who was at Kroonstad and also at Kingswood.

We have not heard from Joe yet but expect to do so before this is posted. We are all anxious to know what he has decided to do. We have not had any definite news as to Reg and Dot's plans but are looking forward to seeing them in the sweet bye and bye. Lynne writes that she is having lots of sport but it does not reduce her weight. She is looking to pay us a visit before she goes home and that will not be until Arthur and Rex are there. Evelyn is looking forward to the children's homecoming from Kimberley. The boys do not expect to get back from Italy before August at the earliest.

Tuesday morning. I had breakfast in bed one morning and did not get up until about dinner time. Am feeling better now but still cough a bit. Have fire every evening. The gentleman at the Irrigation Office is kindly doing the re-writing of the rainfall chart. He is making a fine job of it, far better than I could do it. Baby Joan has been entered for the Baby Show at Potgietersrus. Have not heard the result yet. They staged a mock trial in aid of Red Cross funds and raised wonders there. Must stop, sheet full, goodbye,

Love to all,  
Dad

as Wednesday June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is a very long time ago since I started so late with my weekly letter. The fact is that it has been a very trying time the last few days. The weather has been atrocious, cold north winds, dusty days, no sunshine to speak of, a little rain – ten points – and fires going each day. This has given a depressing atmosphere over everything. Mom developed a miserable cold and as I write (3 pm Tuesday) she is still in bed. We have had a fire in our bedroom the last two nights and shall probably have it again tonight. Sunday was a dreadful day, Mom did not go out of the house all day. We sent up to the Premier today for our dinner instead of going round to have it. So you can understand that I have been extra busy. However I do not like to miss writing as I think some of you may be disappointed. To make matters more difficult, it is the end of the quarter and financial year for the church and being treasurer, I have to get the essential statements out for the Auditor. This in itself entails a good deal of figuring but it is ready now for making a final copy.

It has also been a busy day on the phone and callers. Yesterday, Aunt Kate Dudley dropped in and talked to Mom for some time in bed. Then another lady called to see Mary's electric heater she has asked me to sell for her. This lady lives just opposite our old home 53A Bree Street. She was able to give us late news of Mrs Peagen and her three children who are now living in their own house in Johannesburg. She bought the heater and may buy some of our superfluous furniture. Mr Stock also called whilst she was here. Later the man who has hired the garage called to pay the rental (£1 per month in advance). He has kindly let me store some of Mary's furniture in the garage. Then the Boy Scout leader brought some money he had on hand for equipment sold. I happen to be Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary of that organisation. So with a few phone calls etc. there was not much - in fact no time to do any writing. Today it has been much the same. Saturday the servant did not turn up and on Sunday we never have either, the maid or boy. The latter only puts in half a day. I think it was on Friday when Mom was supervising his work that she caught cold. Well, we have much to be thankful for. Aunt Emmie has sent me some Cape Town papers with illustrations in of the recent floods at the Cape. We are thankful to have escaped that. In other parts of the country, the weather has been bad. There is plenty of snow on the mountains round here. All the foregoing seems as an introduction but it may interest you as a sort of side view into our manner of life.

Now for the news of the day. Mary is, I think, at Potgietersrus today spending a week with Reg and Dot. Then she goes on to Dorothy Murray for a while. Alison is due back from her Dorothy tomorrow. She has been on a visit there for about three weeks or more. Mary tells us that Olive has bought a property in Walmer and her sister, Hilda and her husband will also be living there. He has sold one of his farms. Dudley, Joyce and Raymond are, we think, with Douglas and Evelyn for the week. The children will be home as well. They look to come to Cradock about July 5<sup>th</sup> and stay for three weeks. They will pack up all Joyce's belongings and send them to Cape Town. We hope to see a good deal of them. Joyce speaks highly of the progress Eric has made on his farm. All their children are away at boarding school – now home for the holidays. Beryl is up there too. I have advised them not to travel by the same train that Joe and Trevor did so as to avoid the six hours wait at Naauwpoort. Strange to say we have not had a line from Uitenhage since Joe left us a fortnight ago today.

Ted wired asking for any spare tools I have for sale so have sent an assortment by goods train. He is taking the three children to Zululand for the holidays. Apparently he has obtained another month's leave. Grace is not going with them as she is having the house done up. Hope she will not indulge in attempting to paint the ceiling as she did once before and fell from the table with unpleasant results. We had Mr and Mrs Wood (formerly Miss Hoskings) of Observatory to super one evening. They are here to avoid Cape Town winter. He was wounded in the last war and still has a bullet in his lung. There were two but one went right through him. Mrs Wood is sister to Rev Cook of Cape Town. We knew her very well at Observatory and they brought many messages from old friends.

The Mayor gave a reception to returned POWs in the Town Hall recently. Mom did not care about going so we were not represented for which I was sorry.

The photo of Grace's two girls has now been the round and returned to us. All speak highly of the same and think the girls excellent. Then we have received an enlargement of Dot and the baby. It is very good of both but of course we have not seen it. That pleasure is in store for us. No word of their coming just at present.

Mom is spending all day today in bed but I think she will be up tomorrow if the weather is fine. We are having fire in the bedroom again tonight.

I think this must suffice for today. Will try to do better next time.

Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

The last week has been a pretty hectic one. Mom caught a nasty cold on the Friday previous in superintending the garden boy and it did not improve with keeping. However, by nursing up and having her meals in bed and a fire in her room, it is gradually getting better and I hope before this is posted I shall be able to give a clear bill of health. I am glad that I have been able to do what has been necessary without having to call in Doctor or an extra nurse. We have found it more convenient to send round our 3 decker set of pots for our dinner to the Premier instead of going there. We may continue this for the present. They have no objection, in fact it saves them a little trouble as we do our own washing up etc. Sunday when we have no servant on the premises, we asked them to send it round after their regular boarders have had their dinner. Perhaps by next Sunday, Mom will be able to go there.

Ted and the children have not been able to get seats for Zululand until 11<sup>th</sup> so part of their holiday will be spent at home. I do hope Grace will not get knocked up with the house painting. We have been picturing Mary spending the week with Reg and Dot and shall be glad to hear news from that quarter. Alison returned from her visit to her Dorothy on Wednesday last. We have not seen her yet. Dudley and Joyce and Raymond have been at Douglas and Evelyn's at Grass Ridge and no doubt have had a good time. News will come in due course. They are expected at Aunt Eliza's on Thursday unless they change their plans and come by another train as by the one they have chosen, they have a wait of six hours and arrive here at 10.30 p.m. if the train is up to time. They look to spend two or three weeks here as Joyce will have a lot of packing up to do as all her goods and chattels are going back to Cape Town. Dudley hopes to go to Grahamstown for a few days whilst here to visit his old school – St Andrews – and meet some of his old Masters.

Eric and Freda have worked very hard in developing their farm. They have it very nice and comfortable we hear and when the children have finished their education – possibly at the end of this year, the financial strain will be easier. Joyce tried her hand at milking whilst there and has come to the conclusion that cows are the most contented creatures on God's earth. Her effort was not successful.

Kingsley and Cecily are both growing a pace. Evidently they are not taking after their mother who was a Short by name and stature. Douglas hints that when the children have gone back to school, he may be able to take a run down to see us again. He and Evelyn will be very welcome as well as any member of the family. Lynne still hopes to pay us a visit before she goes on leave when the boys come home from the north. Reg is still trying to get extra petrol so that they can come down by car but it seems to me that it will be difficult as restrictions are getting tighter and tighter.

Aunt Jessie's hand is getting better, she is able to write a little now and can play the piano. She asked Aunt Kate Dudley to play the organ at the last service. Neville has been down to Uitenhage with Nancy and we expect to hear some news shortly. Godfrey is still in England. We hear that Uncle Gervase has sold his farm to Gordon Saunders. It is expected he will go and live in Uitenhage again. All three daughters are married now and Hope is at Rocklands boarding school but of course she would go to Uitenhage if they go. We have not heard if Clifford Saunders has bought another farm. I think they have to vacate Highlands about September. Mrs Saunders and May want to live in town but have not been able to find a suitable house.

Joe went back to work last week as the doctors have not been able to find any cause for recommending his retirement on pension. He has been offered a piece of vacant land in the town at 30/- per month. At present it is a mass of grass and weeds. It will cost about 30/- to have it ploughed up etc. We do not know if he has decided to take it yet.

Mrs West who I mentioned recently was so pleased to know that Aunt Emmie was my sister. She knew her when Aunt Emmie was helping at the Board of Aid in Cape Town. Mrs West was a Miss Hoskin and used to visit a friend of hers at the Board of Aid. She enquired if Uncle Bert was still living. Her husband is much better since he came to Cradock. There is no talk of



removing the bullet from his lung which was left there from the last war. Another old friend has been attending church here for some time and I only contacted him and his wife on Sunday morning. I had recognised his face but could not put a name to him when I was told he was gardener and steward at the March Memorial Homes at Rondebosch for about 20 years. He remembered the night when I took a service there and all the electric lights went out, he said. He and his wife are staying on one of Mr Kew's farms near town and I hope to see more of them. They are a nice old couple. Really the world is very small.

I have written the above early on Monday morning as today and tomorrow will be fully occupied with meetings etc. Am glad to say the weather has been much better than previous weeks but very cold at nights. Mom is getting up about 11 but wish she would stay in bed for a few days longer. I have some nasty chaps on the points of some fingers and thumbs which does not add to the comfort of typing etc otherwise am keeping well.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

The important news of the week is the arrival of Dudley, Joyce and Raymond in Cradock on Friday morning last at about 9.45. I went to meet them at the station but did not recognise them as the train steamed in. However, they had spotted me and we were soon on the way to Market Street. Aunt Eliza was not quite ready for them as she did not know for certain when they would arrive. Her flag of welcome was not up. Talking about flags, I noticed on Victory Day she had the Union Jack in the passage, she did not like to fly them on the front stoep as they might offend some of her neighbours. However the welcome was very sincere and they soon settled down. Dudley looks very well. They have enjoyed their visit to Eric and Douglas and other farms in that neighbourhood.

He left Croydon Aerodrome at 9 a.m. on the Monday, had lunch at Marseilles, supper at Rome where they slept. Saturday they had lunch at Athens and supper at Cairo where they slept. Sunday they started early and had supper at Kisumie arriving at Pretoria at 4.30 p.m. on Monday. That was good going compared to over three months by sailing ships in the Settlers days and a month by steamer when I came to South Africa in 1887. The arrangements at Pretoria, Dudley says, were very unsatisfactory. There was no one on duty at the refreshment department. Kloppe, who was responsible for the surrender of Tobruk, was there. Well they are going to be busy getting off Joyce's goods by goods train as soon as possible to Cape Town. We are asking them to have supper with us on Thursday as that is the day just between their birthdays. On Wednesday evening the Mayor is giving a public reception to all returned soldiers in the Town Hall. I expect Dudley and Joyce will be there.

Tuesday morning. Grace sends us news that Ernest Saunders has been transferred to Pretoria and all his family have come down to Fish River. He has bought a property in Kroonstad for £2000, I wonder if he will be able to sell it at a profit. We are glad to hear that Ted is full of beans. He and the three children will be off tomorrow for the school holidays in Zululand. Miss Hicks, a good neighbour of theirs and with whom Uncle Joe and I had a room when we visited Kroonstad, has sold her property and I suppose will be leaving the town. Grace will miss her a lot.

Dot and family left last Wednesday by car for Vryburg. They took Mary with them as far as Loskop to visit Dorothy Murray. They slept at Zeerust that night and reached Reg's home the next day. They had a very interesting trip. The Loskop canals stretch for miles and the lands are full of crops, lucern etc. Other parts of the country through which they travelled were exactly the reverse and inhabited by raw natives. Hartbeespoort Dam was full and presented a grand sight. We are sorry to hear that Reg's Dad is very ill. Freda had been there to help and just missed seeing Dot and family. They are going to Douglas for a few days and then back to "Madrid", the old home. Dorothy Murray says baby Joan looks like Aunt Eliza. Douglas speaks of paying us a visit but Evelyn thinks her boys may soon be home and does not want to be away when they arrive. Aunt Jessie was in last week, am glad to say her hand is much better. She did not play the organ at last month's service. Uncle Gervase and Beryl are going to Uitenhage by this morning's train from Fish River. Uncle Gervase has sold his farm to Gordon Saunders and has to give possession at the end of August. Perhaps they will come and live in Cradock but I think most likely they will settle in Uitenhage. The laying of the sewage pipes in our street commenced last week but the house connections will not be done for another year or more. The weather has been dreadful lately, strong winds and dust and bitterly cold. Mom is getting better, still has breakfast in bed but does not go out yet.

I have been asked to attend Synod at Grahamstown in August and hope to be able to do so. We have asked Dudley, Joyce and Ray to have supper with us on Thursday. It is their respective anniversaries on 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>.

Letter just to hand from Rex dated June 28<sup>th</sup>. He says he does not expect to be home before December or January and does not know how he can spend the time. He says it would be quite impossible to arrange for a meeting of the four grandsons as Denis being an officer, is not supposed

to mix with those of a lower rank according to military rules. He is complaining of the heat and dreads what it will be like in August.

I am glad to say Mom is much better the last couple of days. She has breakfast in bed and gets up about ten or eleven. We still send up for our dinners but on Sundays we do not have any servant so they let one of the girls at the Premier bring it down.

We notice that the days are getting longer already. The vines will have to be pruned shortly and I hope the result will be as satisfactory as last season. We do not know if Dot and baby are coming here from Vryburg or if she goes back to Potgietersrus first but we shall hear in good time no doubt.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

On Tuesday evening last week we had an unexpected visit from Olive and Mrs Whittal. They had motored up from Port Elizabeth as Olive wanted to settle up her affairs here, having bought a house at Walmer and is taking possession on August 1<sup>st</sup>. They tried to get accommodation at each of the hotels but without any success. They would not even supply them with dinner – they arrived about 5.30 – so they came to us and of course we were pleased to have them. Olive has handed over all her furniture, which has been stored for the last 18 months or so, to a packer and they will be forwarded shortly to Port Elizabeth. Mrs Whittal had arranged to visit Grass Ridge from Thursday morning and caught the early train after having a hasty breakfast. Olive had a good deal to see to and arranged to spend the weekend with her sister, Mildred, so left by early train for Rosmead where she was to be met. Mildred's son, Ralph is back from P.O.W. camp so it will be a sort of reunion. Mrs Whittal and Olive have arranged to arrive back by tonight's train (it is Monday I am writing) and will return by car tomorrow morning via Grahamstown to Port Elizabeth.

We had Dudley, Joyce and Raymond to supper on Thursday evening. It was Dudley's birthday on 11<sup>th</sup> and Joyce's on 13<sup>th</sup>. It was very interesting listening to some of Dudley's experiences in Italy and Germany. Ernest has published quite a good deal re same in the last issue of the Midland News. They leave on Sunday night 22<sup>nd</sup> via Port Elizabeth and the Garden Route on Monday night so I hope Joe and Blodwen will see them as they pass through Uitenhage that evening. Joyce has been busy going through her belongings and packing same. Gladys is coming up for a holiday on August 1<sup>st</sup> and of course will stay with Aunt Eliza.

Mr and Mrs and Miss Carsons also dropped in on Friday evening to see my rainfall chart. Today (Monday) Mr and Mrs Abbey had morning tea with us. Mr Abbey was farm manager at the Marsh Memorial Home, Rondebosch, for many years and when I used to take services there, he was always present. They are living on the farm which would have been Pam Collett's home had she not broken off her engagement to young Mr Kew. Mrs Abbey was a sister at the Home. They are such a nice couple. They have kindly offered to fetch us for a motor spin one of these days.

Ruth has kindly invited me to stay with them when I go to Synod in August. I have accepted and am looking forward to a change. Mom will go out to Fish River for a few days. I am glad to be able to report that Mom is much better and was able to go to service in the morning on Sunday. She has also been up to see Aunt Charlotte with me. She is going to her W.A. meeting this afternoon. Mrs West is giving the address. Mr West is making good progress regarding his health.

Dot writes from the farm that the boys are having a good time, so is Reg, whilst baby seems to make friends with all and sundry. They were going to spend a few days with Evelyn and Douglas and then return to "Madrid" for the rest of their holiday and return home on 21<sup>st</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>. Dot says she will come to us later. It has been very cold there as well as here. Lynne writes that she is going with other girls to East London for the long weekend in August.

Ernest's Joan has been up from Cape Town for the holidays. We did not see her. Jeffrey has been to Johannesburg for treatment and whilst he left the car, he was in for a few minutes, his suitcase was stolen with about £70 worth of clothing. Some loss. Christine has gone with her baby to Graaff Reinet for a few months visit so Ernest and Alison are alone at present.

Joe has hired the piece of ground which measures about 160 yards by 65 yards. He is having half of it ploughed over and harrowed. The ground is on the slope and he says it will be difficult to get transport in and out. He is planting potatoes at present. We had a letter from Rex last week. He does not expect to get home before December or even January. Ted and the three children have gone on holiday to Zululand. Hope they have fine weather.

The men are working on the pipeline just opposite us for the sewage scheme. In Kruger's land they have to go down over eleven feet and there is no room to work in the lane as it is so narrow. Instead of going round for our mid day meal, we have arranged for them to pass it over the

fence at the corner of the two properties. As we have no servant on Sundays, we went there for dinner yesterday. Mrs Rainier has not been well for some time, asthma is her trouble.

Uncle Gervase phoned recently asking what we wanted for our house as he had heard that we wanted to sell. They wanted to start a boarding house in town.

Tuesday morning. Olive and Mrs Whittal returned about 10.30 p.m. and leave for Port Elizabeth after breakfast. Aunt Annie Bertie phoned last evening that Uncle Bertie has been in bed a fortnight with an attack of bronchitis. May is quite well again after her "op" of some weeks ago.

I notice quite a marked change in the length of daylight these early mornings. I wonder if any of you have noticed the brilliancy of Venus before sunrise. It was a beautiful sight about July 1<sup>st</sup> when the moon and Venus were in close proximity. Mary writes enthusiastically about the trip from Potgietersrus to Dorothy Murray's with Reg and Dot. The mirages were very beautiful and they saw a few buck near the road. She is in Pretoria now I think.

Dr Schultz was sent for from Fish River to attend Brian Collett who is laid up at Uncle Gervase's with pneumonia. He is a delicate young man who cannot live near the coast and has been looking for a farm in the Fish River area for some time. He is the only son of late Major Ewert Collett. Am glad to hear over the wireless that Smuts is safely back in Pretoria.

Goodbye for this week,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Let me correct a mistake I made last week. Brian Collett is the only son of Wesley Collett, not of Col. Ewert as stated. Am glad to say he is making progress towards recovery.

Mr Badger went to his brother's funeral recently and brought messages of greeting from his niece, Miss Badger who was a teacher at Vryburg and some of our children were taught by her. She is married and is Mrs van Ardt who is Mayor of Lady Gray. She was a very good teacher.

Am glad to say Mom has been able to be up for breakfast all last week. The weather has been warmer the last few days – in fact quite mild. I guess we shall still have frost. Our vines have not been pruned and it is getting late.

Dot writes from Douglas that they have had a very jolly visit. The boys were thrilled with their experience of riding on horses. Alan had a fall but no serious damage was done. Baby endeared herself to everyone. She has cut her first tooth and does not seem any the worse for her having been vaccinated. They were all leaving for Potgietersrus on Saturday last or Monday. Dot has put off her visit to us for the present. She has no competent servant to leave to look after Reg and Alan. Perhaps at Xmas they may come.

Dudley and family left on Sunday night for Cape Town via the Garden Route. All their luggage has gone, some by goods train and the rest with them. They have no fixed plans for the future as to where they are going to live etc. He has to return to the Cape Times for six months service when his leave is up and if the Military doctors are satisfied that his nasal trouble is cured. Dudley contributed an interesting article on some of his experiences and observations on his time in Europe. I will send it round for all to read. All three of them are looking very well. Gladys is coming on a visit to Aunt Eliza about the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. It is difficult to find a suitable person to sleep in the house but I have promised to go up every night whilst she is alone to see that she is alright.

Dot says Douglas is putting on weight. Evelyn says Dot's boys have grown a lot. Norman is a little taller than Cecily. Lynne is the shortest of the family. Kingsley and Cecily are now back at school. Mr Hudson Senior has been in Vryburg hospital for some time but was expecting to return to the farm this week.

Grace says that Ted and the children cannot obtain seats for their return journey until August 3<sup>rd</sup>, they will therefore be a few days late for school. It will be Ted's birthday on 26<sup>th</sup>. We have not been overburdened with letters from any of them but of course we must remember they are on holiday. We had a nice letter from David and he does not think he will be home before December or later. We have had letters from Olive and Mrs Whittal since they got back to Port Elizabeth. They had a safe and comfortable journey and had been to Uitenhage since. They did not see Joe or Blodwen as they had no time. We now have all of Mary's goods that were stored elsewhere in the spare room. I wonder where she is going to settle.

The Municipal contractors have finished laying the sewage pipes as far as our side gate. It will probably be a year or two before the house connections will be installed. The Contractors are several weeks behind in their work according to the schedule. When they get to the upper part of the town, they will have to do a lot of blasting in the rocky soil. Owners of property have to arrange for their own installations.

Douglas is very satisfied with the sale of seventy oxen he went to see sold at Johannesburg. Some fetched over £29 each and others over £25 each. He and Evelyn will be coming down on a short visit in the near future I expect.

Tuesday morning. Aunt Eliza was alright last evening. She says she was reading until about 11.30 on Sunday night when she switched off the light. She had had a busy day tidying up after Joyce and Dudley left. Last Sunday Uncle James would have been 91 if he had been alive. Ernest, Alison and Jeffrey were at the station to see Joyce and Co off. They sent some butter with them as it is unprocurable in Cape Town. Am sorry we did not think to do the same. Aunt Emmie

had another accident recently. She upset a kettle of boiling water. Fortunately this time it did not fall on her foot. I must try to get down to see her some time.

The old home in Bree Street was knocked down provisionally for £1825 at the sale on Saturday last. I do not know if the sale will go through. It is a good time to sell property as houses are so scarce. Our flex on the heater last evening fused so shall have to get a new length. It was so mild we did not have a fire. Days are certainly getting warmer. The sun was shining into the kitchen window at seven thirty this morning. The maid still arrives about eight. The boy only comes about three p.m. as he goes to school in the morning. Just at present he rides on ground from the street excavations for the sewage scheme as it seem to be good garden soil.

Talking of houses, what I am afraid of is that the Government may take steps to billet returned soldiers upon people who have spare rooms and force them to accommodate them. We would then be obliged to take whoever was sent to us. That would not be at all to our liking. However we must wait and see but I would prefer to be prepared for such a contingency.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Monday afternoon. Mom has just gone to her Women's meeting in the Church parlour. It is a windy afternoon and I hope she will not get any harm through going out. The typing rather annoys her so I try to do as much as possible whilst she is out. Am glad to say her cold is much better and now that the weather is warming up a little, she is able to get about more. For nearly three weeks she had breakfast in bed. Since last Tuesday, we have not had the old maid, Candance. She has been sick. However we have managed quite well without her except that the rougher work has had to be left to some extent. I found that without her, we were able to have breakfast, make our beds, tidy the room and all the essential works and have them finished by 9 to 9.30. The boy comes at 3 pm except on Saturdays when he comes in the morning. She (Candance) turned up this Monday morning at 8 and finished her work by dinner time. We have been going round to the Premier for dinner which saves time and incidentally washing up.

The Sewage works in our street started on 16<sup>th</sup> and Dundas Street is practically finished so far as bringing the pipes to the boundary of each property. It will be another year or more before the individual house connections will be installed. The contractors have had a very difficult job in working in Krugers Lane as there is an underground storm water drain which they have had to get under to a depth of about eight feet. This has meant uncovering the storm drain etc and we have not been able to use the lane in consequence. I nearly fell into one cutting but it gave me a nasty fright.

On Saturday we had the vines pruned. A lot of dead wood has been removed. Old Mr Muller is not well enough to do the job this year so has sent a relative of his, also a Muller, and we hope the result will be as satisfactory as last year was. We have also had the roses trimmed up.

Did I tell you of the sad loss Jeffrey sustained in Johannesburg a few weeks ago? He had gone for treatment for his damaged arm and whilst in Johannesburg with a friend, he got out of the car for a few minutes to do some shopping and when they returned, all the new clothing he had recently purchased (about £60 worth) had been taken from the car. What a loss. He is now back at Rhodes. Did you see the Outspan of July 27<sup>th</sup>? There is an article on South African poets and Guy Butler is described as the Poet Laureate of the South African Division. His photograph appears as well. Guy's wife is already packed up and is only waiting for word to embark for England. Guy is still there and is going to Oxford University probably for a couple of years. He got the Rhodes bursary.

Am glad Joe and family were able to see Dudley and family as they passed Uitenhage last week. They had a comfortable journey to Cape Town. Dudley is still on leave and nothing is settled as to future plans except he is due to return to the Cape Times for six months service. On Thursday evening, Gladys Webster is due at Aunt Eliza's and I think she is staying two or three weeks. She has been looking to come for quite a long time. I think I told you that they have purchased the house they have been living in at Rondebosch for some years. They have improved it a lot I hear. Aunt Eliza had invited Mrs Halliday to come and stay with her for a while. She has been staying with her son, Professor Halliday in Johannesburg for about a year. Unfortunately she had a fall in the street and was laid up for some time. She sends a message of greeting to our family as we know them very well when she was living at Mowbray. She had declined Aunt Eliza's invitation. Aunt Eliza has also invited Mr and Mrs Cook, friends of Mr Thomas to come and stay with her. They are waiting for a passage back to England and have no idea how long they may still have to wait. Another visitor who may come is Mr Alec Henderson who is going on pension shortly and returns to England when shipping is available. I go up to see her every day whilst she is alone. The party who slept in the house whilst Joyce was away does not want to do it any more and no one else seems available.

I am still looking to go to Synod at Grahamstown on Friday morning 10<sup>th</sup> but post as usual to Cradock. Mom will probably go to Aunt Jessie for a few days.



Dot and family are home by now. We hardly expected she would be able to bring baby on this trip and having no competent servants to look after Reg and Alan, she has put off her visit to later in the year – perhaps about Xmas time.

Douglas and Evelyn are coming sometime soon. There is a big sale of stock at Brooklyn. I do not know if it interests him. Nice letter from Lynne, she is spending the long weekend at East London. So far as we know, no one is coming to us. Ted and children cannot get seats back to Kroonstad until 3<sup>rd</sup> so they will be a few days late for his resumption of duty and school. We hear they have had a good holiday. Grace has done a lot of painting etc to the house whilst they have been away. David does not expect to be home before December or January, the same with Arthur and Rex. Douglas needs their help on the farm. Douglas sold a lot of cattle at Johannesburg recently at very good prices. He went up to see them slaughtered and graded and sold. There is money in cattle. We still have a fire in the evening but at present there is no coal to be had in town. Shortage of trucks is said to be the reason.

5 p.m. Mom has just returned from her meeting and it turned cold. Must stop now and address envelopes and post in the morning.

Lots of love to all and hope are in good health,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Monday, Bank Holiday, and a beautiful bright crisp morning, the temperature just on freezing point and every indication of a fine day. Over the air I have just heard that the Holiday in England is seriously interfered with by strikes by the railway workers. Here we have made no plans for a picnic or anything. There will not be any post delivered today and so far as we know, we shall not have any visitors to be entertained or to entertain us. It will afford me the opportunity of preparing for my short visit to Grahamstown at the end of the week. There is a possibility of going by car instead of train for which I shall be glad. I shall know later on.

You will be glad to hear that the last of Uncle Norman's boys, Godfrey, has safely returned home by boat. I heard the welcome given to the ship at Cape Town on Friday morning. Their train was timed to arrive at Cradock about ten pm on Saturday but in order to save a six hour's wait at Naauwpoort, three motors went up from here and took the local boys off the train and they arrived about 5 pm. Needless to say there was great rejoicing. At Katkop they had a number of friends yesterday (Sunday) to welcome all three of the boys who are now home. Neville is to be married at Uitenhage on September 1<sup>st</sup> and I expect it will not be long before Godfrey is married. We do not hear anything about Keith getting married. We have not seen Hilton yet. He is very busy ploughing at Retreat. He is well. On Friday evening we had a phone message from Amy Collett (George and Hilda's only daughter) who is engaged to a RAF boy now in England and she is expecting to get passage home very shortly. She will get married on arrival there. She asked if she could spend Saturday night here so as to say goodbye. She had a boy school chum of her brother's who would also like to come. He attends a school in King Williams Town. He is German, born in South Africa. They had supper with us and went to bio after. Sunday morning they went to see some of Amy's friends and came to dinner with us at the Premier. We sat outside on the lawn and chatted until about four. Amy is quite looking forward to her home in England but I fear a good many of our South African girls will find it very different to what they have been used to here. They left for Groenkloof about five.

We have been exceptionally well off for letters during the past week. Blodwen writes that baby Dan has two teeth at six months. He sits up and eats almost anything and has discarded his bottle. He weighs 20 lbs. Dr Ruth is very fond of him and enjoys a good romp. The snaps of him are very good. I hope when some more are available, they will be sent round for all to see. Servant troubles are prevalent there as elsewhere. Two snakes have already been dispatched on Joe's plot. I had a nice letter from Milner Brown, he is still in the Air Force and will be going to Pretoria shortly and expects to be on the air shuttle route anywhere between Cairo and Pretoria. Dot and Co arrived safely back home last Monday. All had a good time, the boys shooting, riding etc. Norman has gone back to boarding school. They talk of a possible visit to us about Xmas time. Dot has been busy pruning her fruit trees, mending boys' clothes and packing Norman's things for school. I understand the result of their shooting was one meerkat and a partridge!

Gladys Webster arrived on Thursday night. As requested, I did not go to meet her but she had a comfortable journey. We hope to see a good deal of her before she returns to Cape Town. Aunt Emmie is far from well. Her hearing, sight and general health leave much room for improvement. She would dearly love to be able to take a tour round to visit all her family but altitude is the great trouble. I must try to make a plan to go and see her some time before it gets too hot.

We expect that Ted and the children are home from Zululand by now. Grace has had a quiet time but been very busy repainting the house and generally spring cleaning. We hope they are all well. Being a public holiday, we shall not hear before about Wednesday. We have not heard from Mary since she was at Dorothy Murray's. Guess she is at Johannesburg today attending Friends' general meetings. She will be going to Louisvale shortly and then to Graaff Reinet. After that, we don't know. Joe tells us that all military work in the Railway workshops has suddenly ceased and the men are now back on ordinary Railway work. He does not say if this means that overtime work

ceases. I don't think he has been doing overtime work since he was so unwell. In any case, overtime undermines the men's health in the long run.

Grace asked us to send her some of our vine cuttings as she wanted to get a trellis planted. We did up a nice parcel and sent them to the station but the Railway refused them unless a permit from the Department of Forestry was obtained, so that's that. We gave the parcel to Aunt Jessie who was in to do some shopping that day. Evelyn has been busy pruning. Her garden takes a lot of attention. Did I tell you that Arthur and David met in Italy? They do not expect to be home for some time yet.

Monday afternoon. The weather changed during the morning, the wind rose and it turned quite cold again. We have not been anywhere except to the Premier for dinner. Hope Lynne is having a good day at East London. There is a serious water famine there. Our garden boy has not turned up today. He is playing football. Krugers Lane is still blocked but will be opened again some time this week.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

Tuesday morning. Aunt Eliza had a fall in her sitting room yesterday afternoon whilst Gladys and I were there. Apparently no serious injury resulted.

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

This is a day of days. At seven this morning we listened to the Declaration of Peace in the world once more and I trust it will be the last day of warfare in the world for all time. Shall no doubt refer to the events of the last few days as I shall be in this compartment until about nine p.m.

Let me say at once that I brought my typewriter with me in order to be able to keep up my practice of sending a weekly letter and also to have it overhauled by a competent firm. Way has not opened for me to do any typing but I have found that I have been overloading the machine for some time past by doing too many letters at a time. I have therefore been advised to reduce the number of copies, and do from ten to five. This means rearranging the circulation department and the only way that I can see how to do it is to make each copy do for two instead of sending a copy to each. So for the present, starting with this issue, I shall post one copy to Ruth and after reading same, she will post it on to Joe. One copy will go to Grace and she is asked to send it on as soon as possible to Dot. Another copy will go to Lynne as she gets it the following day after posting and will forward same to her parents at Vryburg. Another will go to Mary and she sends it on to Aunt Lettie and from there it can go to Olive. The fifth will go to Aunt Eliza and to Aunt Emmie and then back to me for my records. I will enclose stamped directed envelopes for each so that there need be no excuse for any unnecessary delay in transit. Incidentally, it will save me a few sheets of paper every week and having purchased a supply of the best carbon paper obtainable in Grahamstown, I hope the several copies you get will be more easily readable than some have been in the past. Let me say here that owing to the rocking of the train, it is very difficult to avoid pressing the wrong keys thereby causing many mistakes in typing. I am very fortunate in having a coupe to myself and am in a saloon which goes right through to De Arr so will not have to change at Alicedale. There is a two hour wait there for a connection from Port Elizabeth so I shall be extra comfortable. There is a very strong headwind blowing and it is cold too but I am nice and snug so far. Ruth has kindly supplied me with sufficient creature comforts for the journey so I am set up for the day. I was glad to get a second postcard from Mom before leaving Grahamstown and to find she was well and will be home tomorrow morning. There are a crowd of Kingswood boys on the train as the school has broken up for their holidays. They are remarkably quiet so far. I have just given those in the next compartment a puzzle to work out which will interest them.

The country round here seems very dry but not so bad as in the East London district and town. There the inhabitants are restricted to the use of water to two hours out of 24! The country between Grahamstown and Alicedale is very hilly and reminds me of the Valley of a Thousand Hills between Maritzburg and Durban. If anything, it is more beautiful here as there are more trees. The pity is that there are not more. Farmers seem to be content to plant them along the ridges but they will grow almost anywhere if they are given a chance and are protected from stock eating them when young. It is mostly grass veldt. There are a number of tunnels on this section of the line which has made it an expensive line to build and maintain. Two engines are employed on the train. The line runs mostly along the top of the hills.

I am charmed with Ruth's home. The house belongs to the Presbyterian Church. They have only been in it for about two and a half months. It has been newly done up for them and looks very nice. There is still some finishing touches to be attended to but it is exactly what they wanted. The rooms are not very big, they are compact, well ventilated and very convenient. There is a small garden in front of the house, a very small lobby, about four feet square opening on the left into the spare room – which is the largest room in the house and which was occupied by me. Incidentally I am their first visitor. The room on the right is their lounge complete with fireplace. It is very comfortably furnished. There was a fire most evenings. The wireless was in almost constant use, especially when the news of the termination of the Japanese war came over. We sat up till eleven in anticipation of the official announcement coming over but it only came this morning, Wednesday. The dining room adjoins the lounge and is a very cosy room, with fireplace. This opens onto the back stoep from which a few steps lead down into the garden. The house faces north and south.

The garden is not too large, is well stocked and is at present a great source of pleasure to both John and Ruth. Ruth looks after the flowers etc. whilst John takes the responsibility of keeping the house supplied with vegetables. They have a nice strip of lawn too. From the dining room, there is a short passage which leads to the bathroom – with geyser. Ruth's bedroom adjoins the passage. Opposite the bathroom is the kitchenette. Fortunately neither Ruth nor her domestic, Lidia, are of great dimensions otherwise it might be difficult to find room in which to work. They have an electric stove and a gas ring on which all the cooking is done, and done exceedingly well. The accommodation is only about four feet square so you can imagine how compact everything is. Lydia, by the way, has worked for Ruth for the past eight years and is a most competent cook and is quite reliable in all respects. She sleeps on the premises and as Ruth is out a great deal during the day in connection with her duties as one of the librarians at the Public Library, she is able to leave the household duties to John and the maid. I can testify to the fact that the result is quite satisfactory. Of course Ruth would much prefer to stay at home to look after things but since so many of the men who went to war have returned to their jobs, John has not been able to find suitable employment. He is an artist of considerable ability and is very handy about the house. I wish we could find such a convenient house in Cradock. The property is pleasant for situation, in the best residential portion for the city – opposite the Catholic school, not overlooked by any other building. The meetings were over by mid-day Tuesday so in the afternoon, John and I took a walk through the Botanical Gardens where we met Mr Schwartz, former curator of the Cradock park, who gave us afternoon tea. He seems very happy in his work but shall not be surprised if he does not use his present position as a stepping stone to some better financial job. He certainly is a most capable man. Am very sorry he left Cradock. We also visited the Museum for a few minutes. Portion of the building was destroyed by fire a year or so ago. The building has been restored but many of the animals and other specimens were destroyed and cannot be replaced. On Sunday afternoon, Milner's wife and daughter came to see me. Also their next door neighbours, Mr and Mrs Abbott. Mr Abbott is organist to the Presbyterian Church. Milner's wife and daughter are looking very well. Milner is at present at the Oudtshoorn Airfield and expects to be transferred to some spot between the Union and Cairo. Now that the war is over, all plans in every department, both military and civil, no doubt will be materially changed. Of course, Ruth is most pleased as the prospect of Denis' return home is considerably improved. We too will rejoice if it hastens the return of our four grandsons.

During my visit, I had the pleasure of meeting a number of old friends. One was the minister from Port Alfred who says Mrs A.W. Fincham, who bought our house in Cradock, is still living. Mrs Sparks of Cradock was helping with the tea at one of the intervals. Rev Weavers and Joe's friend, Mr Moulton, both report Joe as looking better for his holiday up north. Mr and Mrs Putterill gave me a lift one day and a Miss Newcombe, a delegate from Port Elizabeth and now on the Grahamstown municipality staff, was very kind in giving me lifts to and from the meetings. Mrs Urie's daughter, who is at Rhodes University, spoke to me after church on Sunday. The weather was for the most part changeable. It was quite cold some days and one day it was almost uncomfortably hot. I found the hills very trying and I had to take them very slowly. The shops appear to be well stocked. There was a fire alarm one evening but it was only a chimney. The outlook from the back stoep at Ruth's gives a fine view of a great portion of the town.

I have not referred to the meetings. They were quite interesting and some excellent addresses were given. There was a very fine atmosphere throughout. I was amongst eight others who were nominated as representative to attend the Conference at Pretoria in October but was not elected. I am not disappointed. Perhaps later on Mom and I will go north and see.

It is nearly four pm and we are now past Alicedale and the light is not too good so I think I will give it a rest and address the envelopes and post tonight when I get home. The train is running to time and the Examiner assures me we shall be at Cradock by 9.30. I am going back to an empty house and the next two days being proclaimed public holidays, may find it difficult to get supplies but we won't starve. Please excuse all mistakes. The train is rocking so much it is difficult to get a move on. Much love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

I hope that the changeover from typing only five copies of my weekly letter instead of ten has not seriously inconvenienced any of you. That it is bound to cause delay in reaching some of you is unavoidable but I suppose you will get used to that. If you can make any suggestions whereby the distribution can be improved upon, please let me know.

Recently I received a characteristic letter from Hilda, Jim's wife from Louisvale. Her letters are always "breezy". Her little son – also named Jim, said on her birthday "shame, so old and yet so willing". She says she does not know what she is willing about. She says she does not want to write anymore or even play, just sit! The drought has been, and still is, very severe with them. She has had to see to the trucking of 2150 ewes and lambs and 40 head of cattle by train to the Oliphants area. The railage, including cost of feeding on route, runs into £650. Half of this amount is paid back when the stock returns. She sent a foreman and boys to look after the stock which cost over another £20 per month. Some job! Jim is still in the army and the Defence Force will not release him yet. Last month Hilda trucked 1800 pockets of graded grapefruit and oranges. These went to Cape Town and were reported on as being the best the depot had ever seen. The report completely cured her backache! Her foreman, who has worked for her for the past ten years, is leaving her. She concludes in her letter by saying that if ever she had to be born again, she would wish to be either a man or a woman but certainly not both again. After a full days work on the land, come home at sundown, make up the fire, cook the supper, wash up, then settle down and darn young James' socks and mend his trousers for school next day. A man puts up his feet when he gets home at night! They are busy pruning 20 morgen of sultanas and fruit trees and ploughing in compost. Truly she leads a very busy life.

Am sorry to say Ted does not seem too well after his holiday in Zululand. He is putting in twelve hours a day at the office. Far too much. Pam's report is good and she hopes to get a situation at the end of the year. Grace thinks it may not be so easy as so many returned soldiers and girl clerks will be filling places and have preference over others. Jean has three more years to go to school and is getting on well. Lynne had an enjoyable weekend at East London. Her hockey team came second in the tournament. It was very cold there and the drought very serious.

We have received invitations to Neville and Nancy's wedding on September 1<sup>st</sup> at Uitenhage. Miss van Niekerk is getting married here the same day. We look to being present. She has been a good worker in the Sunday school. Godfrey is to be married to Miss Bladen here shortly and Hilton has become engaged to Harvey Brown's sister. Mom was at Fish River whilst I was away at Grahamstown. Aunt Jessie went with her. She also spent a couple of days with Aunt Agnes. They all were well. The held a kitchen tea and presentation to Uncle Gervase and Aunt Rouena on the Saturday afternoon. The kitchen tea was for Neville and Nancy.

Joe has had five bags of potatoes ploughed in at his plot and is very busy with his farming operations. It must be interesting and healthy work and I hope will be a financial success. Dot says he ought to have an agreement with the owner that he receives at least six month's notice if they want him to give up the land. Baby Joan has a funny little trick of wagging one leg when feeding or excited. She calls it her lamb's tail! There is a prospect of them all coming down here during the Xmas holidays. It is something to look forward to. Petrol rations may by that time be easier. She thinks that Alan will want to be a farmer, now he has had a few rides on horseback and shot a dassie and partridge. We must wait and see. Perhaps when he hears of Hilda's and others experiences of hard work and disappointments, he may not be quite so keen. Recently they had an uninvited visitor one night who was looking for the hotel at the corner of their street. He was very drunk and fell in their garden. She says our old friend, Mrs Legg, is staying at the Orient Hotel in East London for three months. She has ten grandchildren now and many of them will be gathering there for the holidays. Dot says that some of the fountains and springs about Reg's old home, which have been dry for 15 to 20 years, are now running again and this in spite of the severe drought which has prevailed for some time in Bechuanaland. Can anyone explain this? Has the excessive rains in the

Cape Town area got anything to do with it? The farming partner with Reg died suddenly. His wife died recently and left him with six children under 16 and two step children. It was the largest funeral seen in Potgietersrus for years. Baby Joan will soon be walking from all accounts. She is evidently very interesting and a great mimic. Grace reports all home safely and Harold came home for the weekend. The doing up of their house is finished except some outside work still to be done.

Mary has arrived safely at Louisvale and will be returning to Graaff Reinet with Aunt Letty next month. By the way, Aunt Letty will celebrate her 89<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup>.

No more room so goodbye for another week.

Love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Rex writes that he is now in the first stage of his homecoming. He is in the south of Italy and is waiting for transport to take him and others to Egypt. He expects to be home by October, I think. Judging by reports of the state of the camp in Egypt, it cannot be very inviting but General Smuts has promised to improve matters. We must hope for the best. It is 3½ years he has been away. Grace writes that Harold was home for the Victory services. He wants to qualify for the ministry when he is out of his apprenticeship. I am pleased to hear it and hope he will do well. Ted is still not up to concert pitch. The improvements to the house are completed I think and have met with approval.

Douglas and Evelyn will be coming down pretty soon. He has a meeting in Vryburg to attend on 31<sup>st</sup> and another meeting in Bloemfontein on 12<sup>th</sup> September, I think, and then might come down. Last evening, Mr and Mrs Abbot told me they were returning to Cape Town by car on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>. They called today to say goodbye and I asked them if they had a spare seat that I could contribute towards the cost of petrol. They expressed their pleasure of the chance of having my company and would not accept any assistance and would be very pleased if I would go with them. As you know, I have been wanting to go and see Aunt Emmie for a long time and now the opportunity has presented itself. So I have wired to Douglas saying I am leaving early Tuesday by car for Cape Town and asking he and Evelyn to try and come here from his Bloemfontein meeting. I shall of course return by train from Cape Town.

As Aunt Kate was in town to see Uncle Dudley this Monday morning, she informs us that she is going to Uitenhage on Friday to attend Neville's wedding on Saturday and will return by Sunday's night train and go straight through to Fish River and will be delighted for Mom to join the train here and spend the time with her I am away at Grass Ridge. So that fits in as thought it was prearranged. You will no doubt wonder why she was in to see Uncle Dudley. That is another story. Last Tuesday Uncle was catching some young horses in the kraal at Grass Ridge when Uncle and others had got the rein over the horse's head, the rein got entangled round Uncle and he fell heavily and damaged his right elbow. It broke the skin and the kraal dirt had to be washed out etc. He had to be brought to town to have stitches put in. There was not a vacant bed in the hospital so he stayed at the Masonic (as they always do) and he has been going to the hospital twice a day since to have it dressed. He spends the evening with us and from Tuesday will come and sleep here. Uncle Norman's son, Keith, is now working for Uncle Dudley at Grass Ridge so he was able to drive and took Aunt Kate back. Uncle Dudley will return home by the same train on Monday morning with Aunt Kate and Mom. He says he does not think he has spent such a long time in Cradock since he was at school. He keeps the damaged arm in a sling. Miss Metcalf has been alone in that big house of hers for some time and came along last week and asked if she could sleep here for a few nights and we have been pleased to have her. She has been with us since 20<sup>th</sup>. She has her meals at her home.

I saw Gladys off to Cape Town yesterday, Monday morning. She has been in Cradock for just on three weeks. Am sorry to say no one has been found to sleep at Aunt Eliza's yet but am hoping Miss Enslin will take on the job again.

Miss Metcalf has given Mom a pair of "ear shells" to see if they will improve her hearing. I hope they may do so. Mom is getting more and more deaf and her sight is such that she cannot see to read or write much. I had the misfortune to break my bottom plate but the dentist has fixed it up again.

I may mention that the route we take next Tuesday will be via Graaff Reinet, Aberdeen, Beaufort West, Laingsburg, Cape Town – a total distance, according to the RAC route book, of 568 miles. I mentioned the possibility of taking the trip to Gladys when seeing her off and she kindly offered me hospitality. She lives quite near to Aunt Emmie. I shall take my typewriter with me most likely. We shall plant to sleep at Laingsburg which will be 386 miles from Cradock, quite a



good run in one day. The last time I went this route was with the Town Clerk when we slept at Worcester the first night. That was 448 miles in one day.

Later. I hope Aunt Letty has a happy day tomorrow for her 89<sup>th</sup> birthday. Wonder if she might be at Brooklyn next week when I pass there on the way to Cape Town. I see John Schroder stood for the East London School Board election but was defeated. Mr Sutherland, our old grocer at Vryburg, died suddenly. He was a very nice man. I saw Aunt Eliza this morning and she says she does not want to have Miss Enslin again so I don't know what to do for her now, but hope someone will turn up. Hope none of you are inconvenienced by the delay in getting your copies of dear all.

Lots of love to each and all. My address will be c/o Mrs Webster, Bankop, Grove Road, Rondebosch, Cape.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is Monday evening and I am working against time. I think I told you last week that I had an offer of a free motor trip to Cape Town with Mr and Mrs Abbot. I wired to Douglas informing him of the offer and suggesting he visited us after his Bloemfontein meeting but up to the present, have had no reply. As the Abbots had arranged to start on 4<sup>th</sup> (tomorrow at six am) I had to decide what to do. I have decided to take the risk and am trying to do my weekly epistle before starting so as to save carting the typewriter to Cape Town. We had arranged for Mom to go to Grass Ridge with Uncle Dudley who has been spending about a week with us, going to hospital twice a day to have his arm attended to. Am glad to say he is better and doctor has given him permission to go. He left this morning. There is a municipal election on today and Fenner Moorcroft was anxious to get as many votes as possible so he phoned last evening suggesting that if Mom would stay over for today, he would motor her out tomorrow as he has to be out that way on business and will drop her at Grass Ridge. So she has stayed over. She will see me off in the morning. We look to have breakfast on top of the mountain tomorrow. We may perhaps look in on Brooklyn for morning tea but the time factor will decide when we get near the spot. Perhaps we shall not get further than Beaufort West the first night. I have not decided how long I shall be away, that will depend upon what news I hear of Douglas' plans.

We have not heard any news as to how Neville's wedding went off on Saturday. Quite a number of relations from here and Fish River went down, including Aunt Jessie. Invitations have now come for Godfrey's wedding to Miss Bladen on October 9<sup>th</sup> and we hear that Hilton may be married about the end of the year. Keith is now working at Grass Ridge for Uncle Dudley.

You will be sorry to hear that the doctor has ordered Ruth to bed for a rest. She has been working too hard. There is nothing organically wrong Dr says.

Aunt Emmie is very pleased at the prospect of my seeing her so soon. No plans have been made for anyone to stay with Aunt Eliza I am sorry to say.

The wedding of Miss van Niekerk on Saturday was very largely attended. The reception in the Sunday School Hall was crowded. We did not stay very long.

Olive writes that she finds it very lonely living alone at Walmer. The houses are far apart. Hilda and family are also at Walmer.

There is no definite news about the boys returning from Italy. Ruth says Denis is chaffing at the long delay. He is now in the south of Italy. Kingsley was playing football in Vryburg recently for the Kimberley team. These little trips must be a very nice break for the boys. Gwen Hudson has been in Johannesburg recently for a major operation but is now home and better again.

It is seven p.m. and I have not started packing and have to start at six in the morning so must get a move on. Am going up about nine to hear the result of the municipal election and go to post and see Aunt Eliza. You must use your discretion about posting either to me or to Mom. What I get I will send on to her and what she gets will come on to me. Have notified the Post Office to redirect my post.

Please excuse the shortness of this letter but I am sure you will understand. As the native boy said in Vryburg "time is few".

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It will be as strange to you to see a written copy of my dear all as it is to me to write one. The fact of the matter is that in coming to Cape Town, I brought my typewriter and by my carelessness left same on the hotel stoep at Laingsburg. I phoned back to the hotel and they had taken care of it and promised to send it on. They did not do so until Monday 10<sup>th</sup> and up to the time of writing, it has not turned up. The Stationmaster here has the necessary consignment note and has enquired everywhere but without success. It looks as though it has been stolen from the train. I have put in a claim for a new one. The same make of machine is not obtainable in the country but a larger (and more expensive) model is expected in a few weeks time. Of course I must wait and see what the Railway is going to do about it and that probably may mean some weeks delay. Needless to say I do not like breaking the continuity of my letters. So much by way of explanation. I find writing with pencil is far more difficult and cramps my fingers and wrist.

I must try to summarise what I have done, where I have been and who I have seen. We had a glorious trip down without any car trouble or mishaps. We left home punctually at 6 am Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>, arrived at Rondebosch at 6.30 p.m. Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup>. We only had one meal in an hotel (Laingsburg, where we slept) all the others we had in the veldt. My friends, Mr and Mrs Abbey, had provided very liberally, so much so that practically nothing that I brought was used. I am glad I brought a large thermos of milk which kept beautifully fresh and cold the whole way. They do a lot of motoring – Victoria Falls, Game Reserve etc all over the Union. They carry a kettle, stove (methylated spirits) seats, crockery etc. We had poultry, homemade bread, jams and plenty of it. We were favoured with perfect weather and so far have not had a drop of rain. The roads for the most part were in good order and that from Aberdeen to Brandfort were dramatic. We covered 168 miles the first day and 120 the second. The scenery as we got near to Cape Town was of course the best. During the winter there has been plenty – if not too much - rain. The Hex River mountains had some snow still and the beauty of scenery along the river, Baines Kloof, right to the perimeter of Cape Town were so grand that we did not hurry! We saw evidence of the heavy floods as we got nearer to Cape Town and also the big development of new houses in all directions. Pinelands has grown tremendously and in Cape Town itself, the new Post Office and other sky scrapers and flats have sprung up all over the place.

Douglas wired to Dudley to meet Evelyn's nephew (Flying Officer Edwards) on his arrival from England. As he could not get away from business, Joyce and I went to the Docks and saw him off by train. This gave me the opportunity of seeing the new work which was started just before I left Cape Town and is now completed. The largest ships in the world can now come into the bottom of Adderley Street.

I am glad to say that Aunt Emmie has kept well all the time I have been here. Have enjoyed many talks together. She is not as deaf as Aunt Eliza but is getting that way. Her sight is worse than mine and her general health is far from what one would like it to be. She is giving up the cottage which she has been in for some years and from the end of this month, will live with Dudley and Joyce as they have bought Mrs Halliday's property at Mowbray. We went over to see it this morning and I think they will be very comfortable. She will have the largest front room with her own furniture and do for herself. Gladys and Tom have also recently bought the house they have been living in for many years and are very comfortably settled.

Amongst the many old friends I hoped to meet was Muriel Norquay of Vryburg who was very interested in hearing of all the family. She has no children and both parents and two brothers are dead. I called on the Prices but they were out. Saw the Vermaaks and others. Dentist Reneke is fixing me up with new top and bottom plates and have to see him tomorrow morning. I leave for Uitenhage in the afternoon and spend his birthday with him and get home on Monday morning. Have written to Mom to return by Tuesday train 25<sup>th</sup>. More to follow when I get time.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

For the last four weeks I have not been able to send any regular letters, owing to my typewriter having been lost. Fortunately it was waiting for me on my return home on September 24<sup>th</sup>, but was damaged. A local man has been able to repair it, and Grace is officiating as typist, and no doubt you will notice the greatly improved typing and spelling (i.d.t.)

The story of my trip to Cape Town and Uitenhage must wait for another time. There is much of interest to tell, but I suppose you will be most interested in hearing of my sudden illness. Mom arrived back the same morning as I did, by car, with Aunt Jessie and Enid, who stayed to dinner with us. It was a nice afternoon, and after supper, Mom and I went up to see Aunt Eliza and we were caught in a very cold wind. Tuesday morning I was unable to get up, and was coughing a lot. Mom sent for Uncle Gervase in the evening and he decided that the Dr should be called at once. He came about 10 p.m. and at once realised the seriousness of the situation; he insisted on a nurse and took steps to secure Enid who came on Wednesday afternoon. Uncle Gervase spent the night with us. Wednesday was my worst day. The Dr prescribed injections of Penicillin every three hours, in addition to M & B tablets and sleeping draughts. They certainly arrested the trouble but he only had enough Penicillin on hand by Friday for one more dose, after which, he said, nothing more could be done for me unless more supplies came to hand and I interjected "except to bury me". Fortunately a new supply arrived by post and thus my life was saved. In all I think 6 bottles of the stuff was injected into the muscles of my legs. I had to put off Roy's visit, and was sorry to disappoint him. Grace and Joe arrived on Friday morning and have been a great source of comfort and help. We have had phone calls from Douglas, Dot, Ruth, Lynne and Mary at Graaff Reinet, not to mention Fish River. All were greatly appreciated. Joe brought Aunt Eliza down in her wheelchair on Sunday afternoon, the first time she has been to see us for over a year. I was able to embrace her. She is looking very well, and enjoyed the outing. Joe made an attempt to take her to the cemetery to see Mr Thomas' gravestone but owing to the sewage furrows and the lateness of the hour, had to give it up. Joe stayed with us until Monday night, and has since phoned to say he found all well at home. Today is Douglas' 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and he phoned to say he might be down next Wednesday. Enid left Tuesday night, having been with me just a week and I do not know what we would have done without her. Grace has promised to stay until Douglas has been down, but we have no plans for further assistance beyond that. I am very thankful to say that I have no pain, only great weakness and I hope with care to be able to resume my usual duties. I cannot be grateful enough to all my friends for all their kindness and sympathy. We have had a number of visitors.

The weather over the weekend was terribly hot, but on Monday afternoon it started cooling down and last night it rained and continued on and off all day today.

On Monday when I arrived home, the cat welcomed me, bringing along a batch of kittens from the loft next door and installing them in one of the pigeonholes under my work bench on the back veranda, where she had had her previous batch. They are starting to lap already, so we will have to find homes for them.

Thank you very much for all the kind enquiries,

Yours with love

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

There is not much to report since last we wrote. I am still in bed, though I did sit up for an hour on Sunday and had dinner in the Morris chair. I have not been up since. Dr Scholtz came in on Monday morning and reported that the right lung had not quite healed up, said that part should be painted with iodine and special tablets taken to relieve the pain, which is very severe. So progress is very slow, and not very encouraging.

We have had a number of phone messages from Lynne in the course of the week and are looking forward to seeing her at the weekend. Douglas should arrive soon. We have had a good many visitors today, owing to it being Godfrey's wedding day, and a big splash. Neville and Nancy, his bride, called in just before 3, to fetch Aunt Jessie, who had dinner here. Aunt Gladys also dressed here and left for the wedding in company of Uncle Dudley and Aunt Kitty. Enid also popped in after dinner to see me. She had spent the morning carving cold meats for the Dance Supper, tonight, but is going home after the wedding, taking the children of her three sisters with her, to sleep at Retreat. There is a great gathering of the clan today, and the parents of the Groom at any rate looked very jolly.

The roses of the trellis at the side of the house have been very lovely, we have picked every day, and Christine came yesterday to collect some for decorating the Church. We have had about an inch of rain during the week and the cooler weather has suited the roses. Christine brought her baby along, and he is a fine sturdy fellow of six months now. Rex Moys is in Category C for demobilisation so should be home soon now.

Aunt Emmie has recently moved into a room in the house which Joyce and Dudley have bought in Mowbray. They have had three different consignments of furniture, which has been stored or left for safe keeping in three different places. Aunt Emmie has not moved all her stuff but left sufficient at Green Gate and sublet it furnished to a tenant.

I would love to give you a detailed report of my trip to Cape Town and tell you of the many friends I met. Let one incident suffice to tell you of the kindness which I was shown on one occasion. I had been to see friends, the Vermaaks and Prices at Plumstead one evening and coming back to Rondebosch, I asked the ticket examiner on the train to tell me when to get out as I could not see the names of the stations; a young man in Naval uniform who was sitting opposite at once chimed in "alright Mr Butler, I will see you get off safely" and it was a young fellow whose family lives in Cradock, Mann by name. Perhaps if Lynne will sit still for long enough, whilst she is here, she might be able to take it all down and type it out for me. There is too much to tell in an ordinary letter.

I have had several nice puddings from one of the neighbours, a bunch of flowers from the Town Clerk and staff; and I must not forget to mention the kindness of the lady who allowed us to keep the Penicillin in her fridge.

Mom is keeping pretty well, except for backache. She would not go to the Wedding. Uncle Gervase has been our most regular visitor. Hilda Collett visited us on Sunday. She has been spending a few days in town during the holidays.

Wednesday midday. Very glad to say I am free of pain today and had a very good night. Late yesterday afternoon, Ethelyn and Keith came along, Ethelyn in her bridesmaid dress, looking very sweet. She left her bouquet of rosebuds for me. Then Mrs Bladen came in for a moment with a bit of wedding cake. Then later still, Mary phoned from Graaff Reinet that if Grace should have to leave before Dot could come, she would be able to leave her mother who is getting stronger after her recent illness. All these things have cheered us up considerably.

Post today brings news that "baby" Charles has German measles, but is being well looked after. Letter from Dot just to hand too, thanks. No word from Douglas but we hope he will be here in the morning. Joe phoned Sunday night on his way back from Church with Merle. His potatoes are flowering and he is picking beans etc.

Now no more, but many thanks for all the delicate attentions. Love Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

I am sitting up in bed and it is just 9.30 a.m. and Grace has just brought me the typewriter to see how I can get on with writing a dear all. I am now in my 4<sup>th</sup> week of my illness and very thankful to be able to say that I am feeling better but still very weak. The least exertion or excitement puts me into a bath of perspiration so must be careful not to attempt too much. Let me first say a very sincere thank you to all of you for all the kindnesses shown to me, your letters, telegrams and phone messages have been a great stimulus to my recovery. I do not know what we should have done without the prompt response for help that came from Grace, Joe and Enid and now Douglas and Evelyn are here. Townspeople too have been very kind in visiting me. The Town Clerk sent a beautiful bunch of flowers.

Saturday morning. Dad could not get any further on Thursday, but is satisfied that he has made the attempt. Nothing attempted, nothing done – no, I am sorry, “something attempted” ...

Douglas and Evelyn arrived last Sunday morning and it has been a great pleasure and comfort having them here. Doctor visited me three times during the week and has given me more injections and medicine to get rid of the fluid on the lung.

On Thursday he said he had had to modify his opinion slightly, that the fluid was not due entirely to the pneumonia but partly to the heart not functioning properly. Therefore has he has been kept in bed, to rest the heart as much as possible. The medicine has been changed again and he now has to take a bright red capsule as well as other tablets after meals. This treatment started today. Her has been complaining of a pain under the ribs on the right side and is still much troubled with flatulence. Doctor is not coming again until Monday.

Mary also is coming on Monday night if she does not get a lift over by car before that. We are very glad to think that she is agreeable to staying until Dot and family can come down in December. But after that .. We have discussed the possibility of Ted and Grace getting a transfer to Cradock and as far as all of us can see, the arrangement would be ideal. There are great difficulties to be overcome before such an arrangement could come about.

There is not much more to report, beyond visitors, telephone calls and such matters.

Douglas and Evelyn leave tonight at 10.30 and Grace hopes to get away as soon as convenient after Mary's arrival.

Our love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
28<sup>th</sup> October 1945

My dear All,

I'm sorry to say I can't do my typing yet, but Mary is doing it much better than I can.

I feel I am making progress though still taking two medicines daily (horrible stuff!) and injections every other day now. Mary rubs it in very nicely. Doctor is not coming every day now, he misses one or two days at a time. I sleep very well and really feel I am getting better though slowly. I have a very strong desire to get to my desk but in the meantime, am looking through papers etc in my room. The other evening, in attempting to ward off a moth, I broke my spectacles but Mr Bergman kindly fixed them up again putting the lenses into a frame I happened to have without charge.

We have had letters from Grace, Rex, Douglas and Evelyn, Dot and Dennis, all bringing good news. Joe is very busy with his plot of land. The drought is very serious there and here. Grace described the Orange Free State as being in a terrible state and cattle dying on the Kroonstad commonage. Ernest Saunders, we hear, is going into a bakery business there with a returned soldier. Douglas and Evelyn were probably in Pretoria on Monday in connection with the meat industry. We all hope Rex will be on the boat due on Tuesday and we are looking forward to a visit from him in due time. Dorothy has been among the highlights of the Transvaal, deputising for the Mayoress in entertaining the Administrator and other high Government officials. Dorothy's letter was long as well as interesting. She remarked baby Joan was on her lap falling asleep as she began what she called her last lap! Reg has recently been away attending the Municipal Congress being Deputy Mayor. He spent a few days with Trixie. Dennis writes from Bari in Southern Italy but he was looking to a move to a place near Trieste within a fortnight. His letter was dated 16<sup>th</sup> October and it arrived on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Since V.E. Day, he says he grudges every day away, time drags but he hopes with luck to be back at Christmas and resume his studies at Rhodes at the beginning of the New Year.

Mom has turned up an old photograph of the family taken at Botha House, probably by Joe, in it are Reg and Dot Grace and Ted, Blodwen and children. If any of you have not got a copy and would like it, I am willing to part with it.

Mom is planting some mealies in the garden in the hope of rain coming soon, it is very sultry this afternoon and there have been a few drops so perhaps by the New Year, there will be mealies for dinner sometimes.

You will be sorry to hear Aunt Emmie has had another bad turn, she was better but feeling dreadfully weak when she wrote. Aunt Eliza has paid me two visits since my illness. Her old Sarah has now left and she has another girl. She continues to send me homemade toffee and gingerbread and when butter was scarce, she kindly let me have a little.

Later. Dr Scholtz has just been and taken my blood pressure etc. He declared himself very satisfied and has given me permission to go into the drawing room for a little while morning and afternoon but not to dress yet.

(Note by Mary). I was going in to ask Uncle for more "copy" when the front door bell went and Mr and Mrs Campbell arrived. So, as I know Uncle would like this to get off this afternoon before 5.30, I will finish by corroborating what he has said about Doctor's report. Uncle is definitely stronger and the secret of steady recovery, I feel sure, is adequate rest. I am trying to insist on 7 a.m. as coffee time (at the earliest) and a rest (with the glasses well out of reach) in the afternoon till 3.30. He and Auntie are both trying to be good! But patience is one of the hardest things to practise as one gets older.

Love to all of you from us all,  
Dad

Please overlook mistakes.

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
7<sup>th</sup> November 1945

My dear All,

This morning I am sitting in the lounge, it is nearly 9.30 and I don't feel any the worse for getting thus far, though still short of breath.

Yesterday Jessie had dinner here and Neville and his bride spent part of the afternoon with us. The two latter are still working on their house at Junction View, needless to say they are radiantly happy. I had dinner in the dining room for the first time. Aunt Jessie is brighter now that the boys are back but is thinner. She still brings in eggs for sale and kindly brought butter and biltong as very acceptable presents. We still had some of Evelyn's biscuits for tea which is now of the Bush variety.

Doctor seems satisfied with my progress but the injections are to continue. My hair, beard and moustache have been neatly trimmed by my nurse-barber. Another addition to my beauty, and temporary discomfort, is a new set of dentals that has just arrived from my old friend, Dr Reinecke of Cape Town who, when I visited him, insisted on looking at my teeth and making a set top and bottom for cost price. They require a little adjustment before they will be of much use to me. He strongly advised me to retain the teeth I still have, saying it would be positively dangerous to have them out at my age. One of the many things he said that amused me was that he could tell people's character by their teeth!

As no news of Rex being on the Carnarvon Castle has come yet, we are giving up that hope. Between 200 and 300 men, mostly non-Europeans, passed through here this morning en route for Port Elizabeth.

The heavy marble clock that I bought at one of Pietersen's sales has gone "off" strike for some time and was not working. Douglas got the works out and took them to the new Swiss Jeweller to put in order. It was returned this week and the man says it is a very good old French make and puts its market value at £50. So if any of you send along the cheque for the amount, you may have the clock. The same man bought the cabinet I kept the pianola records in for his instruments.

This will have to be enough for today, so with love to you all,

Dad

P.S. later. A visitor interrupted and my amanuensis thought the letters had to be posted before 5 p.m. but any time tonight will do, so we will continue.

As a result of Douglas and Grace's visit, and conversations with the family, we suggested that Ted should try to get a transfer to Cradock and that they buy the house and we keep a room and live with them. Grace thought it a good suggestion but we are sorry to say that further development of the idea doesn't seem possible after consultation with Ted. We hope that some suitable arrangement will develop along other lines for the future.

Mary looks to go to Graaff Reinet for Winifred Biggs' wedding on the 14<sup>th</sup> December and as the schools will be breaking up just before, she hopes to get a seat by car.

Joe tells us he has lost potatoes from his plot, evidently the work of thieves.

Hubert de Beer has written to me that he has given up his paper in Tarkastad. He has lost both his sons in the war, poor man.

Vivian Jordaan sent me a copy of the Bantu World published in Johannesburg, presumably he is now on the staff of that paper which has taken on a new lease of life after the fire there during a riot some time ago.

Mom is not very well today, she has taken a cold going out last evening when there was a cool wind after a hot day. She is sleeping in her own bed in our room again.

Lots of love

Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1945

My dear All,

We were all pleasantly surprised this morning to hear there was a trunk call from Queenstown, of course it was Lynn and her announcement was that she would be arriving this afternoon and we are happily anticipating her arrival. I am lying on the cosy corner and am happy to say am much better and able to walk about without a stick. Doctor's last visit was on Saturday and he will not be here again until next Saturday unless called for. Injections still continue every three days, am taking the same two medicines and stay in bed to breakfast, retiring at about 8 p.m., sleep fairly well, and alas dream far too much.

One recent dream was that Ted had written saying why he couldn't get a transfer, and in the post the next morning, there was a letter from him saying he was applying for one. He warns us it may not materialise but time will show. His doctor says he can't do anymore for him but he needs plenty of fresh air and more rest. He doesn't want to sell his plot at present as owing to gold mining development in the Orange Free State, he hopes it will increase in value. The prospect of Ted's possible transfer comes as a very pleasant surprise, and we look forward to further developments.

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>. We got so far with the dictation when Gervase arrived with Langford Collett Senior from Louisvale. He is nearly 80 years of age and very active and cheerful in spite of a very serious operation some years ago. We last saw him at Louisvale on Aunt Lettie's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and it was very pleasant to have a chat. His son, Langford, who was with us in Cape Town was on active service in Scotland and has brought back a Scotch wife with him.

Last evening at about 7 o'clock, Lynne arrived and left again at 1.30 today. It is now 5 p.m. and she has just phoned to report her safe arrival. The trip cost her nothing as she got lifts both ways and drove from Tarkastad to Queenstown. It was very delightful having her and I sat up till 10 p.m., the latest I have been. Lynn is disappointed that Arthur and Rex have not come home yet, and she is looking to going home at Xmas for ten days but will not be able to take her holiday as promised yet owing to the Senior lady clerk having left after 20 years service. Lynn is now promoted and for the present, till someone else is appointed, the only clerk.

This morning Christine brought her beautiful baby, two boys and handcart and took away the double bed and mattress she has bought.

At dinner time the post arrived with a long letter from Dorothy, the first part of which Lynn read to me. After she had left, we all rested and then had tea after which Mary read the whole letter to us both, and the news at the end is almost too good to be true. She has got seats for the 21<sup>st</sup> of this month from Johannesburg for herself and her little nurse girl, so we may expect them to arrive on the morning of Thursday next week. Reg will see her off from Johannesburg so she will have no change and it will be a great help to have the little nurse girl who can sleep on the back stoep. Reg and the boys hope to follow later and look to spend a week or so on Capt. Steven's farm, which is about 14 miles from town.

On Mary's birthday we had about a dozen visitors, most of them to afternoon tea. After they had gone, Mrs Saunders, her daughter May, and Clifford came. They have sold their farm, Highlands, and have bought a house in town. Clifford is on the look out for a farm for himself now. He has been to Hilton Collett's wedding in Johannesburg and was able to tell us about his visit to Grace at Kroonstad.

Aunt Eliza is keeping well and hopes that Muriel and her two children may be arriving towards the end of the month. The children have been granted a few days extra holiday from school on account of the long journey they are taking to Cape Town, this will allow for a break here.

We are wondering what plans Joe and Blodwen are making for Christmas. Lynn may be able to come for Dingaan's Day.

Douglas sends frequent pithy postcards. He is a very busy man, and is travelling a lot in connection with the co-op and other business.

Mom's hay fever is troubling her a good deal lately but otherwise she is able to be about her usual activities. We both send our love, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1945. 7 a.m.

My dear All,

Here I am again back at the old job of trying to get some news over to you early in the morning. Have had early coffee which Mary made. The girl, Candanse, has just arrived and is sweeping the dining room so I am typing on the back stoep, so long. I do not know how far I will get but hope to post before 5.30. It is just over eight weeks since I returned from my trip to Cape Town and Uitenhage, and what a time it has been. I am truly thankful for all the loving care and attention that has been paid me by all of you as well as by outside friends. I hope I will not have to cause so much anxiety and trouble again as I have in the past weeks, but one never knows. I certainly did not expect this illness and it puzzles me to know how it occurred. Everyone thought I was looking so well. However, never mind the cause, the fact remains I have been very near to the gates of death and my life has been spared for some good purpose no doubt. I hope I may still be of some service to mankind in the world. As I get stronger, I hope to be able to get about but at present I cannot do much. Yesterday evening after supper we three, Mom, Mary and I, walked as far as the corner near the park which was far enough. I have also crossed the road to say thank you to Mrs Botha, the monumental mason's wife, who so very kindly sent supplies of dainties across to me.

Doctor did not come to see me for a week but came last Saturday and said goodbye. I hope he will not have to be called in again. He has been exceedingly kind and attentive. Mary is still to give me injections every third day and I am to continue with the medicine for the present. I sit about the house and occasionally go the length of the garden but walking is not a strong point with me at present. Mr Dodd called yesterday afternoon and was glad to hear family news. All his clan are going down to Kidd's Beach for a month or more. Mrs Dodd has not been well for some time.

The important news of the week is that on Saturday last we had a wire from Dot saying that her departure was delayed and that all the family were coming about the 30<sup>th</sup>. Now we hear that they are all leaving by car on 27<sup>th</sup> and look to spend a night with Grace and Ted and then come as far as Colesburg the next day and arrive here about 30<sup>th</sup>. The Government has relaxed the petrol regulations so it will be much nicer for them to travel by car than train and I hope it will be less expensive as well. Having sold our double bed and mattress to Christine Moys, we shall put Dot and Reg and baby in the spare room (we have erected Mary's bed in that room). Mary will have Pam's room until she goes to Graaff Reinet for Winifred Bigg's wedding and meanwhile Norman and Alan will have the lounge, then they will change over into Pam's room. The nurse girl will sleep on the back stoep. Douglas and Joe have both expressed their intention of coming whilst they are here.

Breakfast time. Christine has just called with her bonny baby. He is a very friendly chap and goes to anyone. I want to see him and Dot's baby together.

Joe has sent us an orange pocket of his potatoes. They are very fine but Mom thinks they are too fresh to keep. We have sent some to Aunt Eliza, Alison and others. Dot also sent us some of hers by parcel post. Joe says he does not think he will keep on with his plot. It is too far away from his home – about a 20 minute walk – and he cannot give it the time and attention it needs. Apart from that, there are too many thieves.

The envelopes for my Xmas cards were delivered yesterday so I have a big job of addressing them. The overseas ones I hope to get off this week, the others can be posted about 15<sup>th</sup> December. I hope they will be appreciated as former ones have been.

The drought still continues. Douglas had about an inch of rain recently but not nearly enough to ensure a crop. We had a terrible dust storm yesterday afternoon, just after the windows had been washed. Candanse has had a bad place on her left hand for the past few days and so brought her daughter to do the washing. Mary has been dressing the place and it has yielded to her treatment. We shall probably arrange to have our mid-day meals at home when Dot and family arrive. We have been sending round to the Premier ever since my illness. Mary cooks fish for me.

We are hoping that some of the boys may be home from up north before Xmas but it seems doubtful. Derrick and Roslin Collett came to see us on Saturday evening. He is being discharged from the army. For some time he was with Denis. Of course Douglas and Evelyn were hoping that Rex would have arrived by the Carnarvon Castle but no such luck. It must be very trying for all the soldiers who are waiting to return.

Ruth will be leaving her job at the library next week. She is looking forward to resuming her writing again. We have suggested her coming up for a change. John has found work for the time being.

Joe would like the children to get away for the holidays. Blodwen has written to Fish River to see if any plan can be made there. Captain Steven's place is fully booked up for December. Reg was hoping the boys could have gone there.

Our wireless mast has given trouble and men are working at it now. It is just 9.15 a.m. and my sheet is full, so goodbye.

Love to all, Charles

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday November 28<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is Tuesday afternoon, the temperature in the sun is standing at 101, it has been up to 104 today. Yesterday it registered 100. Last night was very close, a sheet was almost a burden and it has been very overcast all day. Perhaps it may rain before the day is out, if the south-easter does not spring up. We are feeling very sorry for Reg, Dot and family driving in this heat from Potgietersrus to Kroonstad. A postcard from Dot to Mary, received this dinner time, says they may arrive here sometime tomorrow evening or Thursday morning. We shall have hot baths ready for them, the most refreshing comfort we can offer them. This morning's post has brought letters from Joe and Blodwen asking us to try and get accommodation for them all somewhere near us if possible from December 15<sup>th</sup> to January 5<sup>th</sup>. They would like two rooms and board. They would bring their own maid. We shall try to get them fixed up. Joe has sold my old car after doing 35,000 miles. The same as I did on my old Morris car. He got £135 for it. He hoped to get a larger car later on. He finds the work in connection with his plot is too much for him and will be giving it up. I think he has about covered his expenses. His house was not sold. The highest bid was £850. The reserve was £1000. He has lost weight and is only 126 lbs, the lightest he has ever been. Blodwen, too, is losing one pound per week, the same remark does not apply to her. We have had a sample of his potatoes and they were very nice, have ordered a full bag from him, 150 lbs.

Dot has had a busy time lately. She had to deputise for the Mayor recently by entertaining the Administrator and other important personages. We have received some more snaps of Joan so shall not have any difficulty in recognising her when she does arrive. She has two more teeth and weighs 25 lbs. I shall not do much in carrying her about.

Those who have wireless sets may like to make a note that on Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup>, Guy Butler's poems will be broadcast, under the title of the Poets Corner. I think the time will be either 5.15 or 5.30. His photo was in the Outspan recently. Mary has the chance of a lift by car to Graaff Reinet on December 5<sup>th</sup>. A buyer is going over to the Stock Fair. Alice Bigg's daughter is getting married on 14<sup>th</sup> to Mr Stark of Mulders Vlei. About 300 guests are expected. Mary will go with Aunt Letty to Vrede and spend Xmas there.

Douglas says Rex is due by the next shipload of soldiers. Today we hear over the air that the vessel is due before Xmas. What rejoicings there will be. The same boat is then returning to England with a shipment of passengers who have been waiting to get to England.

Dot and family are here. Lynne is looking to go home for Xmas and says she may get another chance of a trip here before then. We hope so. It is her birthday on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Douglas says he has got the turkey already. We are expecting a fresh supply of honey from there. Rain is badly needed there as well as everywhere else but I think it is not far off now.

Grace is looking forward to Harold's coming home on 14<sup>th</sup>. Suppose he will stay over for Xmas. If I am not mistaken, he is now about finishing his second year of his apprenticeship. There is no word of David returning yet. It is good to hear Grace say that Ted is putting on weight again. There is no word of his transfer materialising. No doubt it will take sometime to arrange. Grace says they have a new heifer calf but with the severe drought, it is going to be some job feeding it. Her friends are frequently asking her to supply them with butter which is quite out of the question. Some people are rationed with only a ¼ pound a week for a whole family. We have been more fortunate than that. Mrs Bladen has been able to let us have a pound each week. Dot says she is bringing some with her but I guess it will be all melted in this heat.

I will not keep this letter over but post before 5.30 so as to be free for any eventuality tomorrow. Possibly we may have a phone message this evening from Kroonstad. I am to go to the dentist tomorrow (by taxi) to have my new teeth adjusted. Hope they will be a success. Our hot plate failed us last week and have had to buy a new one. Have finished addressing my 450 Xmas card envelopes.

Lots of love for all, Charles

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

There is important news this week. First Dot and family arrived on Wednesday evening last week, Rex arrived home in Vryburg on Friday last and we received a wire direct from him on Saturday morning. Reg received a wire from Vryburg on Thursday that his Father was very ill and that he should not delay in going to see him. Her therefore left by the next train which was Friday night and he was due to arrive there about 3 a.m. Sunday morning. We expect news from him at any time. Of course we are all sorry that he had to leave us but hope he will soon be back again. Other items of news for the week will be the near departure of Mary for Graaff Reinet after nursing me for the past six weeks; the taking over of the duties by Dot and I am very thankful to be able to say that as I write on this Monday morning, 3<sup>rd</sup> instant, that I am feeling better this morning than I have done for weeks. I slept right through the night, only waking at five a.m. Those are the headlines, now I must go back again for the details. I posted last week's letter on Tuesday so that you could get the news as early as possible. I want to do the same this week.

Reg and family left Potgietersrus early on Tuesday morning and reached Kroonstad about five p.m. They picked up Norman at his school in Pretoria on the way. Tuesday was one of the hottest days we have had but I am glad to say they did not feel it at all oppressive as, of course, travelling, they caused their own draft. They spent the night there and left about eight a.m. intending to sleep at Colesberg if they could not get through to us in one hop. About six pm. We had a phone call from them from Naauwport saying they had got so far but had not enough petrol to bring them here but were trying to get some more. Petrol supplies are shut off at six and they were a few minutes late. However they found a sympathetic garage keeper who helped them. Sure enough, at 9.15 p.m. we heard the car tooting and they had accomplished the journey of 718 miles in comfort. Reg worked out the mileage as only 17 miles to the gallon. He thinks there is something wrong with the works as when I went to Cape Town, we got 26 miles to the gallon. I did not go to bed as early as usual that night, we were all too excited. The boys have grown a great deal since we saw them last. Norman is taller than his mother and there is every prospect of Alan being the same in due course. Both Reg and Dot are looking very well. Dot is thin as usual but full of energy.

Now what am I to say about baby Joan, that we all have fallen in love with her is perfectly true. She is a proper child and so friendly and good. As you know, this is the first time we have seen her and she is now 14 months old. She is our 17<sup>th</sup> grandchild – Blodwen's Dan is the 18<sup>th</sup>. We are very proud of the whole lot of them. Baby Joan is running about all over the place and needs constant watching. Her brothers are very fond of her and never tire of entertaining her. This morning there was a new stunt on the go, Alan on his back on a mat with baby sitting on his chest riding her up and down the long passage using his bare feet as propellers. She thoroughly enjoyed it. She sleeps all night without any trouble, has one sleep a day and is on the trot all the time when awake. Thursday afternoon, Reg took us all up O'kop and enjoyed it. I was rather flopped out that evening as we also went to see Aunt Eliza, the first time I have been there since my illness. She quite approved of my beard which saves time and expense in having it trimmed every now and then. In passing I may say that Mary makes an excellent barber!

Norman and Alan have put all the Xmas cards into their envelopes and they are now ready for posting on or about 10<sup>th</sup>. I am glad to say that I am feeling much better today than I have felt since I began to recover.

Yesterday (Sunday) I went to service in the morning. Dot drove Mom and I. Mom sat with Uncle Gervase in our regular seat and Dot and I sat at the back and slipped out just before the end and sat in the car so as to avoid having to talk to everyone. Some did come and congratulate me on my reappearance. We all went to the Premier for dinner and are going to continue doing so for this month at any rate. This will save cooking at home. They have met us regarding the price. We are giving the maid an extra allowance for herself to buy meat so as to save cooking here. We have secured a garage just opposite for Reg's car as ours is let. The drought still prevails and the water

regulations have been further restricted - no watering the garden in the mornings and the mains are shut off from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. We still have a good supply of rainwater. The swimming bath in the park is so far completed that bathing is allowed. Norman and Alan are taking advantage of same. Mary and I walked as far as the Bath and on our way home, a dry thunderstorm caught us in the park. One flash of lightning was very terrifying, so near to us.

Joe and family want to come from 15<sup>th</sup> December to January 5<sup>th</sup> but so far we have not been able to secure extra accommodation. I have got the promise of a bell tent which we could erect on the lawn which will do for the boys and we are still trying everywhere for rooms. We had hoped that Uncle Gervase could have helped us out. We are still trying. Tuesday is Lynne's birthday. Wonder if she will go home now or wait for Xmas. Vryburg public has arranged a big welcome home to all their returned soldiers for 7<sup>th</sup>. There is no word of when Arthur will be home but we hope soon. I may try to write another sheet if not, lots of love.

Tuesday afternoon. No word so far from Reg so we do not know when he will be back or if they - he and the two boys - will go to East London for a week. Letter from Joe this a.m. and also one from Merle. She has done very well in her music exam, 118 marks out of a possible 120. She has come second in her class out of 16.

We and they will be very disappointed if they all cannot come to Cradock for their holidays. Aunt Eliza is expecting Muriel and her three children from Maritzburg on 12<sup>th</sup> on their way to Cape Town for their holidays with Aunt Emmie. Aunt Kate - Grass Ridge - called just after dinner so as to catch us before we had our naps. They have no definite plans for Xmas. Mrs Jubb is there. There will be a family gathering at Katkop most likely. We are still making enquiries for additional accommodation and will let them know as soon as possible. Evidently extra trains are to be run at that date and the train they are booked for is due to arrive here about two or three in the morning. The tent that has been promised me will be here tomorrow. If they do not go to East London on Friday, we may all go by car to Fish River for the afternoon as it is their tennis day.

I did not have such a good night last night as the night before but a few drops of rain have been falling which will cool the air. Yesterday Dot bought a pushcart for baby and Alan has made a sort of canopy for it this morning.

Mom was coughing during the night, it was very close. Oh for a good downpour of rain, it would do everybody good.

Mary has been disappointed of her lift to Graaff Reinet but has another prospect for Friday. We have received an invitation to the marriage of Winifred Biggs on 14<sup>th</sup>. We will send a wire.

Must stop now, lots of love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

There are a few things which seem to be urgent and the holidays are close upon us. We are expecting Reg back from his sad journey to Vryburg either on Saturday or Sunday. We do not definitely know if all the family is coming from Uitenhage or only Joe and the two boys. We may hear in the morning. Miss Metcalf called yesterday and kindly offered the loan of a stretcher bed which would be useful in the tent. She also suggested using one of her upstairs rooms but from what I know of the house and the staircase, it would not be suitable and the children might be a disturbance to the other inmates of the house. They are not used to children. Not only so, it would not be convenient for whoever stayed there as it would separate the families and would be very awkward for the respective mothers. Dot has suggested that she and Reg and baby might go there but that does not seem workable either. So we think it will be best to shake down here. Reg, Dot and baby in the spare room as at present, Blodwen, Merle and baby in Pam's room, Joe and all the boys in the tent or on the cosy corner or lounge if it should be wet. The two nurse girls could be on the back stoep or in the kitchen. Dot suggests that she be responsible for getting the breakfast and Blodwen the evening meals.

General news is that Rex gave Douglas and Evelyn a surprise last Friday on his arrival. Vryburg is giving all the returned soldiers a great welcome this evening. They are still hoping that Arthur may be back before Xmas. Rex saw him a few days before he flew down from Egypt.

Harold is expected home from Johannesburg for Xmas. Pam has started work as typist in Kroonstad as a temporary measure. She is very pleased.

Ruth has decided to keep on at the Library until the end of the year as some of the other assistants are away. She and John are going for a fortnight's holiday at Port Elizabeth later on. No definite word of Denis' return yet.

At last I have been able to visit the local dentist. Dot took me by car. He did not have any difficulty in getting them to fit, only a very slight adjustment had to be made and I am able to use them now. Of course, one has to get used to them. We had to buy a new hotplate as the one that I bought on a sale some years ago for 6/- had given in. It has given us very good service. The new one has not made too good a start – it has fused a couple of times but the supplier is putting it right. Another trouble has been the Vispring mattress on my bed has given in with all the extra wear and usage during my illness. The webbing holding the springs in position have broken and has had to be taken to pieces by the mattress maker. It is quite alright now and I hope it won't have the same hard wear that it had the last few months.

We phoned to Lynne on her birthday. She was thrilled at the news of Rex's arrival Saturday morning. We are looking to motor out to Fish River this morning as it is their tennis day. It looks as though it is going to be a nice day but it is not seven yet so is rather early to judge. The boys slept in the tent last night and say they slept well.

Aunt Eliza was not well when Dot went to see her on Thursday morning. She was vomiting and she was able to help her. Mary slept there that night. Mary left yesterday afternoon but is coming back early in January to give help to Mrs Gluckman for three weeks. She has been paralysed for about two years. Josie Biggs was advertising for someone to help look after a relative but in the mean-time, he had been sent to hospital. One applicant, a Miss Hall (52) of East London appeared so good that she thought she might be of use to us. She would give her services free for a comfortable home. She is a retired teacher but does needlework. We have not heard what is likely to happen with regard to Ted's transfer but Josie thought that perhaps the applicant might be of help to Aunt Eliza. I think she will get into touch with her. Muriel and her 3 children are due to arrive at Market Street on Tuesday next and will spend a week there and then go on to Cape Town and stay with Aunt Emmie for a while. Needless to say, Aunt Eliza and Emmie have been looking forward to this visit for a very long time.

Mom still gets touches of hay fever, accompanied with wheezing, sneezing and coughing but it generally passes off during the day. Douglas talks of coming down by car if Arthur returns

soon. Lynne is going home on or about 23<sup>rd</sup> but has to be at her work again by January 3<sup>rd</sup>. I don't know but perhaps Douglas would bring her back.

I don't think there is more to say except that I hope rain has fallen and that it will be fine for the holiday makers. I am keeping about as usual and gradually getting back to normal. There is much that I want to do but get very tired in the doing. I have walked as far as the new swimming bath.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

I am so sorry I forgot to write in time for Grace and Ted's Wedding Anniversary which occurred yesterday (Tuesday). We do offer our very hearty congratulations and hope they may be spared to each other and the family circle for many more years. Owing to my illness, I know I have omitted to record many events but as I am gradually getting back into the old paths, I hope to do better in future. That I am getting back to normal is shown by the fact that for the first time since September 23<sup>rd</sup>, I attended evening service on Sunday last and the outing has not apparently done me any harm. I did not attempt to stand during the singing of all the hymns. Many of the congregation have expressed their pleasure at seeing me out again. By the way, I have arranged with Reg to take my appointment before the end of the year. Another sign of returning health, was a trip to Fish River on Saturday last with Mom, Dot (at the wheel), the two boys, baby and nurse girl. The occasion was their monthly tennis day at the station. This gave Dot the opportunity of seeing most of the relations and spending a very pleasant time with them all. Everyone brings some food and all sit down to lunch. After lunch, Mom and I had a nap in Gladys Colling's house. We returned after having afternoon tea and got home, tired, about five.

Reg got back from his father's funeral on Saturday night – about 12. All except two of his brothers were home. Reg and the two boys have gone to East London for a few days. They managed to get accommodation by phoning to the same place that Mom, Grace and I stayed at some years ago. They could only agree to take them up to Friday so unless they manage to find somewhere else to stay, they will be back Saturday morning. The change to the coast will do them all good. The boys have been very keen on going. They slept in the tent one night but I fancy they found the lawn too hard although they had mattresses.

Mary left for Graaff Reinet last Friday after having nursed me for over five weeks. With her departure, injections have ceased and I am not having any more medicine to take. I have been able to pay a visit to my dentist and by making one small adjustment, has fixed up my new dentals and they are working quite well. Of course I have to get used to them which I hope will not take long.

Douglas writes that he may perhaps bring Lynne back to her work after her holiday on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. He would do the journey by car, being quicker, and would also call here. No doubt Rex and Evelyn would also come. This makes me feel that it would be a good opportunity for me to pay a visit to Vryburg if I returned with them but being summer, the heat might be too much for me. Reg brought me a number of messages from some of my old friends in Vryburg. It is over 20 years since we left there and I am told there have been many improvements in the place. Lynne writes that she had a very happy birthday on 4<sup>th</sup>, many friends, many presents and great fun. She hopes to pay us another visit before leaving for her holiday.

Muriel and her three children are due at Aunt Eliza's today (Tuesday) and they go on to Aunt Emmie next Tuesday. We hope to see as much as possible of them. Reg and Dot went to Market Street on Sunday morning but could not make Aunt Eliza hear their knocking so came away and we went up after the evening service. I did not go in as I am under certain restraints. I am supposed to go to bed about nine, must not stoop to pick up anything, must not stand on a chair or climb a ladder; must rest before dinner and lie down from 1.30 pm to 3.30 every day; have dry meals and must not spend too much time at the typewriter etc, etc, etc. In all these matters I try to be obedient and patient. Sometimes I am caught bending but I am very much better and I sincerely hope there will be no reoccurrence of my recent trouble. I am very thankful for all the loving kindness and attention that has been show to me by all concerned.

Miss Metcalf has sent along a note saying that she has let a Mr and Mrs Drysdale, who are stranded for want of a room, have the room she offered us, so that is off.

Later. I was hoping to hear from Uitenhage and Kroonstad today but nothing has come. Of course Wednesday is generally our best day for post. I fully realise that Ted is making a big sacrifice in asking for a transfer. He has spent a lot of time, energy and money in developing his plot and has not many years to go before he has to retire on account of reaching the age limit. It is

quite possible no one will be found at this office who is willing to exchange, if so, I presume that the matter drops so far as the Department is concerned. I will post this today and may write again this week if there is anything to report.

Much love to each and all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

It is Tuesday morning, Roy and Trevor are by my side watching me type. I hardly know where to begin as so much has happened since I posted my last. However, I hope you will be able to follow me. Monday 10<sup>th</sup>, Reg and his two boys left by the evening train for East London, having obtained sleeping accommodation for three days but were hoping to be able to stay a week. They were fortunate enough to find a place and we are expecting them back by the morning train tomorrow, Wednesday. No doubt they are having a good time as the weather has been fine. It has been very hot here, sometimes over 100 in the shade. No rain has fallen here I am sorry to say. Water regulations for gardening are severe.

Sunday morning Joe, Blodwen and the four children were due to arrive by a mixed goods and passenger train at 4.55 am. Early coffee was ready for them but unfortunately their train was an hour late. There was no dining car on the train and all were ready for an early breakfast. Norman and Alan had been busy erecting the tent. They only slept in it one night so far but Roy and Trevor have slept there each night since their arrival. I must not forget to make special mention of baby Dan. He is eleven months old as compared with Dot's baby who is 14 months. Dan is taller than Joan. Joan is walking and running about all over the place. Dan does not walk but he beats Joan for quick movement. He goes on all fours very much faster than Joan can run. He does not appear to be at all inclined to walk or run, but I expect he will soon start now that Joan is walking. It is very pretty to see them together. Dan is taller than Joan. Joan has taken a real fancy to Joe and goes to him in preference to anyone else. I am quite out of the running, perhaps on account of my hairy appearance. Baby Dan is not as heavy as Joan and I hope he will walk quite alone. Roy and Trevor have both grown, they are thin but full of beans. They are very pleased with the new swimming bath. Trevor says he can swim under water. Merle, too, has grown and is very helpful with baby.

Tuesday evening. Joe took Muriel and her children and Mom and me to see Mrs Saunders in her new house. We left Mom there whilst the rest of us went up Metcalf Road and saw both ends of the new extensions of the town. Last evening we had Muriel and family to supper on the lawn. It was quite nice and cool. After supper, Joe showed his movie pictures of the Golden Wedding and his Vryburg views, including those of Eric and Freda. Of course Muriel had not seen any of these. They were quite interested. They had to be back at Market Street by eight so as to finish packing for their departure for Cape Town. They left at 9.30 this morning by the Garden Route. It has been very nice seeing them again. We had hoped Aunt Eliza would have come down last evening but she did not feel equal to it. I expect some of the family circle has heard of the experience she had recently. A European (Afrikaans) girl went to her and took a fancy to some of her trinkets and walked off with them. It is a long story but the upshot of it was that Ernest got in touch with the father of this girl and was able to get the articles back. It appears that the girl had been sent to a reformatory before and will probably be put somewhere she will not be able to annoy anyone else in a similar way. Aunty has now, I think, realised the necessity for having someone to live with her in future. In this connection, Josie Biggs sent me a letter from a lady who wanted a position as companion, offering her services free for a good home. Josie thought the party might be of use to us or Aunt Eliza. I think Aunt Eliza may secure her. At present she is living in East London.

Wednesday morning. Reg and the boys returned this morning. They have had a very enjoyable holiday at East London and are looking very sunburnt.

I want to throw out the suggestion that instead of waiting for any celebration of a Diamond Wedding Anniversary – which is very doubtful of ever being realised – we may look forward to our 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary during the coming year. I am thinking of writing to Mr Lutge of Rocklands to see if we can get all four cottages for next October 14<sup>th</sup>. What do you think?

The new swimming bath is quite an attraction to the boys. Trevor claims that he can now swim under water.

I must not attempt another sheet, there is such a lot of chatting going on that it is difficult to concentrate. Hope you were all well. Ted was not too well lately. Hope to hear better news from Kroonstad today.

Love to all from all here,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1945

My dear All,

Christmas has come and gone. All 13 of us had a very good Christmas dinner at the Premier Hotel, the dining room was nicely decorated and some of us were decorated with paper hats that the children had made. There was a printed menu with 12 courses, to which full justice was done, and I have kept a copy of this autographed by all members of the family.

The day was hot, 101 in the shade, and a strong northerly wind raised clouds of dust, especially in the morning. All of us, except the two babies, went to Xmas service at 7.30 in the morning, the collection for the Marsh Memorial Homes, amounted to £9.10.0, which was a record.

After breakfast, Reg, who is doing the typing for me today, took us up to greet Aunt Eliza and at the same, Reg and Dot said goodbye. Mom went on to see Aunt Charlotte. Aunt Eliza does not seem to entertain the idea of engaging Miss Hall, and we cannot do anything in the matter until we have heard whether Ted is likely to get a transfer or not. Grace put through a phone call before any of us were up. They were all well.

Mr and Mrs Stock paid us a friendly visit about eleven, it is many months since Mrs Stock came to see us. Reg, Dot and family hope to leave about five o'clock on Thursday morning and intend to reach Kroonstad that evening, where they will spend the night with Grace and Ted, and will make Potgietersrus the following day. Both the babies have provided us with much pleasure and amusement, little Dannie, on all fours, chasing Joan round the dining table, it has been quite a game with them, and has caused much amusement. Reg and his Boys had a very good time and nice weather at East London for the week that they were there and since their return, they have taken us about for motor spins which we have enjoyed.

On Monday, I went up to deposit some Church money at Barclays Bank. I walked up and am sorry to say I found the distance a bit too much for me. Mr Galloway met me as I was coming home and escorted me home. I am afraid it will be some time before I shall be able to walk as far as Aunt Eliza's and back.

Lynne phoned to us just before leaving for her home on Friday. She was eagerly looking forward to meeting Rex and from later information I anticipate that Arthur will be arriving within a few days. Lynne has to be back at work in Queenstown on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and Douglas has suggested that he may bring her down by car and come and see us as well.

Ruth and John will be looking to spend a fortnight's holiday in Port Elizabeth in January and we hope the change will do them both good. Owing to the severe drought, their garden has suffered severely, both of them are very keen gardeners.

We have been reading aloud "The Road to Avalon", a most fascinating story of how a young man, who had lost both his legs in an accident, overcame all obstacles and made good, eventually establishing a camp for crippled soldiers of this war. I should advise anybody who has the opportunity to read it.

We have enjoyed seeing Muriel and her three children. One evening Joe gave them a cinema exhibition and they were very interested in seeing the pictures of the Golden Wedding and his visit to Eric and Freda at Vryburg. They are spending the rest of the school holidays with Aunt Emmie at Cape Town.

We have had from 250 to 300 Xmas cards and many letters. Reg has been doing this typing and as he is busy packing, this will have to suffice for the present.

Love Dad