

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
January 3rd 1948

My dear All,

One of the last jobs I did in closing last year was to go through all the dear alls of 1947 and see that they were in date order and then file them away. I did not attempt to re-read all of them – that would have involved a great deal of time but I did read the first few written in January last year which contained particulars of the early stages of Mom's illness. It was on January 1st that I called in Dr as it was the first intimation of anything serious being wrong. There are between seventy and eighty letters typed during the year besides many of which no copies were kept. This completes fifteen years of dear alls, 1933 to 1947, both dates inclusive. I suppose eventually they will be consigned to the flames. It has afforded me much pleasure and satisfaction in writing them and if they have served no other purpose, they have helped to keep the family in touch with each other. I hope the time will never come so long as life is spared to me that I shall be unable to continue writing. The 15 years records are tied together in one bundle.

The same evening Ted was working late at the office and about 8 p.m. he brought the last letter of the year. The one envelope contained letters from Douglas, Lynne and Cecily, all of which were interesting. Douglas and Cecily went by car on Xmas Eve to meet Lynne and Jerry at Bloemfontein who were arriving that evening by train. Whilst waiting at the station, Douglas noticed a native at his car which was locked. He went for him and arrested him but the mate of the boy had got away with Douglas' overcoat. I do not know what happened to the boy. They left Bloemfontein at ten p.m. and arrived home about three a.m. Some journey! They were all together for Xmas Day, including Emily and Arthur, Hetty and Miss Rowe, friend of Rex. They also went to Leslie Hudson's and spent an evening there and another visit was to Arthur's home and a braaivleis at Eric and Freda's. Jeffrey had to return to work earlier and Lynne is leaving for Queenstown today. She says they are looking to get married this year but the problem is to find a house or flat. Rex had news that he has passed his exam, which is satisfactory. He has a few years more still to go before his final exam. Douglas lost his motor coat on his way back from here so I have sent him mine as it is not likely I shall have much use for it now. I have offered to send him one of my overcoats as well. The farm had a good rain as well which was a very welcome Xmas present.

In my last I think I told you of our Boxing Day picnic. This week there is the New Year picnic to record. There was a concert and dance on Wednesday at the river but as we had a sharp fall of rain in the afternoon, I did not venture to go. I should have liked to have attended the watch night service but for the same reason, I did not venture. Ted and Pam and Jean went and said there was a good attendance. The Presbyterian Minister officiated in the absence of the new Minister who has not assumed duty yet.

So far did I get with my typing yesterday (Friday January 2nd). It is now Saturday morning, 6.30. We have had a heavy rain during the night. It was still coming down at three when I was awake. The average rainfall for Kroonstad is 24 (twenty four inches per annum), Cradock's average is 13.65 per annum. Well I must go back to New Years Day. It was a perfect day for a picnic – not too hot or too cold and in the shade of the beautiful trees which line the banks of the river made it very enjoyable. We did not go to the same spot as on two former occasions but a little further up the river, (there are plenty of nice spots). The party was larger than before and included two families of Walkers, Howards and Bubbs. The latter is Ted's half section in the Post Office. They were living with Grace and Ted when Mom and I visited Kroonstad last time. We hired a rowing boat for the day as before and it was in constant use. The young folk were in their bathing costumes most of the day. The various families brought provisions and these were shared by all. There was plenty of it and we decided to stay for the evening and have our supper there, which we did and enjoyed it. Some of the adults left in the afternoon to attend a funeral of one of the members of the church but returned afterwards. Jean's friend played the organ. One of the ladies of the picnic brought some skeins of silk which had been greatly entangled. This provided me and some others with the task of trying to unravel it. We got through quite a lot of it and I suggested that the balance be held over for the next New Year's Day picnic. After supper, we moved to the

boathouse where a platform on the river had been constructed, with a piano on the float and a variety programme was given. Of course loudspeakers were provided. We had some collapsed table chairs which we brought with us so were fairly comfortable. Most of the audience sat on the ground and steps. The entertainment was provided free by the local musical society. The Municipal decorations were very effective. The hundreds of electric lights arranged just above the waterline gave a very pleasing effect. The reflections making it appear as elongated candles. Quite a few people in boats listened to the entertainment. It turned cold later in the evening but no one seemed any the worse for the outing. The entertainment was over by ten and we were soon home by motor. Some walked home. Needless to say I was very tired and Grace suffered from a headache but was better by the morning. I slept right through till 6.30 and have not felt any ill effects from the long day's enjoyment. So ended January 1st 1948 and if each day of the New Year should be as enjoyable as the first, we shall all have much to be thankful for.

Friday morning shops opened again and I walked to the barber and back, the longest walk I have had since arriving in Kroonstad. Ted, who was going to work, accompanied me and suggested I should sit on his bike and he would wheel me. The offer I politely declined. The walk took me a quarter of an hour each way. Ted does the distance on his bike in less than five minutes. I am none the worse for the walk and hope to keep on keeping on with such exercise.

I posted to Reg and Dot yesterday to Oudtshoorn but this (Saturday) morning I have received a postcard from Dot saying they have given up the idea of going to Mossel Bay and Oudtshoorn and may stay a few days longer at Port Alfred instead and return direct to Vryburg and look to spend Sunday 11th with us and go on home on Monday 12th. This will be very nice indeed. Suppose they will pass through Cradock but Dot does not say. They met Rev Weavers and family at Port Alfred. They have had a very jolly trip and no doubt they will ever remember their experiences. So far there have not been any accidents. A postcard, also by the same post, from Mary who had five hours to wait at Mossel Bay on her way to Stellenbosch. She enjoyed the wonderful scenery. The meetings begin at Stellenbosch on Tuesday.

No news of the "expected" arrival at Grahamstown yet but hope for good news in due course. Lynne is returning to Queenstown today. Seven more Xmas cards today, some have been to Potgietersrus, then to Port Alfred and now back here.

In looking through some papers I came across the following, which is worth repeating, especially at the commencement of the New Year.

The British Weekly, a British paper, held a competition for the best definition of True Happiness. This was the first prize:

"Pure happiness consists of something worthily achieved, something anticipated, and something to cherish".

The following definition was on a calendar:

"True happiness consists in something to do, something to love, and something to hope for."

They are all good definitions, may we, one and all, seek and find true happiness during the year 1948. We are living in a troubled world and true happiness will not be found in trying to get things but in giving service.

Very dear love to each and all,

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Wednesday January 7th, 1948

My dear All,

Reg and Dot have altered their plans and instead of going as far as Mossel Bay and Oudtshoorn, they have decided to return direct home via Vryburg and possibly call here on Sunday 11th and leave again the next day for Potgietersrus. A postcard dated Friday 2nd at Grahamstown stated they were busy packing and also seeing about Norman going to Rhodes University at the end of February so I guess they are at Madrid, the home of the Hudsons, by now and we may expect a phone message at any time now. It was Norman's birthday yesterday and I had already posted to him but have since written for the letter to be returned here.

Yesterday, 6th, work was started on building the extra room at the back of the house and the same day we started bringing in the balance of my furniture. All my books are now on the shelves – not in anything like order yet but that can be done at leisure. The pictures have also been unpacked but I am sorry to say some of the glasses are broken.

Charles is spending a few days with the Saunders, one of his chums, Clifford, spent some days with him here. I am wrong, it is Trevor. Joe writes that he is expecting Roy home from the guest farm near Kendrew where they went last year, about the end of the week. He also thinks that Blodwen will be home again about the same time. She and the three children have been to see Aunt Emmie. We do not yet know for certain if Emmie is going to attend the meetings at Stellenbosch this week.

We had a heavy rain on Sunday night whilst in church. It was almost impossible to hear the speaker. I walked to service in the morning, I took me about 25 minutes. The Howards kindly gave me a lift home in their car. They have arranged another picnic for today at the river. Grace does not feel like going as she has had tummy trouble for some days. There has been a lot of it about. Ted thinks the cause is the heavy rains and the chemicals used in purifying the water from the river before getting into the mains. I had a slight attack during the night.

The maid servant who has been working here for a few months and sleeps on the premises disappeared on Monday. She was working as usual on Sunday but during the night she disappeared without any notice or warning. Tuesday Grace had no servant but another has now turned up. It is a way they have here it seems. We have experienced some very hot days during the past week but as I seldom go out, do not notice it so much.

The Howards are calling for Jean and I about ten so must hurry up and get finished. There does not seem much news to report in this issue. I am sending my typewriter to be overhauled locally as some of the letters are needing attention. Pam says a local man does the Land Bank machines quite satisfactorily. A letter from Norman Butler, England, tells of his remarriage to a cousin of his. He lost his first wife about two years ago. I must write to him by airmail.

I have not time for this but hope to make up for it next time.

Later. A note from Joe just arrived, says a wire came for Norman saying he had passed his exam and wishing him many happy returns. Is sorry that Reg and Dot could not go to Uitenhage. No word here from them yet.

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday January 12th, 1948

My dear All,

The past week has been an eventful one, much has happened and I must hasten to record the most important facts. Perhaps I should give the headlines first as they do over the wireless and then give the details after.

Wednesday 8th, the great grandchild was born to Denis and Dee.

Saturday afternoon, Reg and Dot and family arrived by lorry from Vryburg at 6.40 p.m.

Sunday 11th I reached my 84th milestone. The same morning Douglas phoned offering congratulations. A number of visitors called offering congratulations, the first being Ernest Saunders with a nice assortment of figs and peaches from his garden. Attended service twice, Ted conducting the evening service, and now this morning, Reg and family started at 6.30 on the last lap of their holiday for Potgietersrus, which I expect they will arrive early this afternoon. Jean has gone with them for the rest of the school holidays.

Later this morning, Grace is taking me to the dentist to see about having a new tooth added to my plate and tomorrow morning, I have an appointment with a local eye specialist to see if he can give me a stronger lens.

A postcard from Aunt Emmie from Stellenbosch reports her safe arrival at the Friends Yearly Meeting. She is not staying there for the whole session.

Now to go back. Grace and I have just returned from the dentist, an ex-Mayor of Kroonstad, and he says I must not have another tooth added to my plate. He has eased the extraction and I must persevere with it. If I was twenty years younger, he would remove some of the six remaining teeth which have served me more or less well for 84 years. He accepted the gold that was in the broken stump instead of making any charge for services rendered. I am to go to him again if necessary, so that's that. Our neighbour, Mr Walker, kindly motored us there and back. He is on leave at present.

We are all very pleased at the news from Grahamstown on the birth of a daughter to Denis and Dee on Wednesday last. Her name is to be Rose Mary Elizabeth. Denis says she is a little darker than Tony but is very healthy. Their new address from about February 25th will be 15 Fitzroy Street, Grahamstown. The present address is 19 Henry Street. This addition to the clan makes the number of anniversaries in January very important. Norman had his on the 6th, mine on the 11th, Harold's on 16th, Jean's on 25th, Dannie on 21st and Arthur's wife, Emily, on 23rd. I have received quite a number of letters for my birthday and also wire from Joe, Leslie Hudson etc. Of course Aunt Eliza and Emmie wrote, Mary, Mrs Mayhew, Maude Miller, Hultzer, all at Grass Ridge (Vryburg) and Lynne and Ruth, John and Denis and Lynne. I do not know when I shall be able to answer all these as I have not been able to reply to the sixty or more letters which came at Xmas time. But I want to do so as soon as possible.

Reg and family told us they would be arriving about 7.30 p.m. It was an awfully hot day here and we felt sorry for them. However they arrived at 6.40. I was sitting at my window and saw them coming. They did not come by the same road as we did but the distance was about the same. They left Grahamstown on Friday morning and after taking the wrong road, got to Cradock where they spent about half an hour with Aunt Eliza. They went right through to beyond Kimberley and slept in the veldt at midnight after covering over 500 miles in the one day. They left Kimberley about nine p.m. One reason for their not sleeping in Kimberley was that Reg had forgotten to draw some money from the Post Office before noon and had nothing wherewith to pay for accommodation so they pushed on and got to his old home about eight the next morning. So far they have travelled over 2000 miles and have not had a single puncture or mishap. Some of the roads have been bad and some, especially in the Native territories where the country is very hilly and the road takes many hairpin bends, were dangerous. I hope Norman will find time to write a descriptive account of their holiday. They were very pleased with the accommodation at Port Alfred, so much so that they have provisionally booked to go there again next December. We are glad to hear that Norman has passed his matric exam but second class instead of 1st. There is some talk of his going to the Pretoria University instead of Rhodes but that will be decided later. They have brought back with them some shells and the native boy brought a bottle of seawater. The lorry

has been very comfortably fitted up and has given them good service. Joan has stood the journey well and they all look the picture of health. I am glad they went over to see Douglas and family. Unfortunately Arthur and Emily have been down with an attack of flu but were getting better. Douglas would have liked to have come over or send some of the family but it was not convenient. He phoned good wishes from all on Sunday morning. I had a few words with him but the reception was not very clear. I expect some of you will wonder how Grace and Ted managed the sleeping arrangements for the extra number. Reg and Dot and Joan had the garage, Norman and Alan slept in the lorry and the native boy under the lorry. They were all very pleased with my room and think I have made it very comfortable. It was only last week that the picture rail was up. Ernest Saunders let one of his sons, Raymond, spend a morning helping hang the pictures. There are already 32 up and still more to come. I have a nice photo of Emma over the head of my bed and her grandparents above that, Holman Hunt's famous "the Light of the World" alongside and Aunt Eliza's "Virtue" on the other side. The Golden wedding group and the photos taken just before we went to Vryburg are in front of my desk with the electric clock and calendar. There are a number I still want to erect but it all takes time. Jean has also been a great help. Reg took a few snaps of the room from the front window and I hope they will come out nicely. He also took a few of ourselves but it was rather late in the afternoon. Talking of snaps, Dot showed us some that they took along different parts of their journey. They have been through some of the most beautiful scenery of the country.

Grace has been anxious for Jean to have some of her holiday in the country and so she has gone with Reg and Dot to Potgietersrus in the lorry this morning. She will come back by train if there is not an opportunity by car. She has worked very hard and passed the first year's exam for matric but the stiffer part will be this year. They left exactly at 6.30 this morning and as I write (five p.m.) I guess they are safely at home. Dot's house has been shut up all the time she has been away.

Ernest Saunders was the first to call on Sunday morning and brought a nice present of figs and peaches from their garden. They were much appreciated. Mrs Walker called during the morning. Some of us went in the lorry to church in the morning and again in the evening. In the afternoon, Mr and Mrs Howard and the eldest daughter and Mr and Mrs Pearce came to afternoon tea. After the morning service, it seemed a though the whole congregation was aware of my anniversary and heartily congratulated me. The Pierces also brought fruit from their garden so we have been very fortunate in this respect. The fruit is very good this season and if we do not get hailstorms, there should be plenty.

One of Mr Pierce's sons married one of the Farren girls. She was here to see us with her three children recently. Her mother lives with them in Johannesburg. The Howards have kindly offered to call for me every Sunday for service. They live about two miles out of town on a plot. The daughter, Jean's great friend, plays the organ in church. She and her father came in after the evening service and with the aid of Norman and all the family, we had a very nice singsong of hymns etc. Ernest Saunders was also with us. We closed about ten with family worship. Ted took the evening service and gave a very helpful short address. The Howards gave a picnic at the river last Wednesday but Grace did not go as she was not feeling well. In fact she has not been up to the mark for some time. Charles got very blistered through staying in the river too long. The day was very hot but there is plenty of shade all along the river.

Ted and another senior man are on double shift all this week owing to some of the juniors having to go to training defence camp. This disorganises the work of the office considerably. Of course, overtime is paid for the extra duties. His hours this week are from six a.m. to eight p.m. Half an hour is allowed for breakfast and an hour for dinner. Grace sends his supper to him at the office. There was an alarm of fire as we went to service. The Brigade turned out smartly. The fire was a small affair but the number of cars and cyclists etc was considerable.

Tuesday morning 13th. Yesterday was very hot. We were very sorry for those travelling. Whilst sitting on the front stoep after supper, we heard the fire alarm again, this time the fire was in a house on the opposite side of this street about half way to the Post Office. We heard that the iron had been left on on the back stoep, hence the alarm.

Dot has just rung up – 7.15 a.m. says they got home about 6.30 but had a nasty experience when they neared Warmbaths – about 30 miles from home. A Traffic Cop spotted Alan driving the lorry. Of course he is under age. Reg had to sign an admission of guilt for £5 and he was fined £2 for allowing Alan to drive, £7 in all. This just at the end of their splendid holiday must be very annoying. Otherwise they are alright.

I have forgotten to mention the splendid present of fruit that Douglas and Evelyn sent us by Reg and Dot. There was also a tin of honey for me, which is very acceptable. I must not attempt another sheet as I have so many other letters to write. Many thanks to all who have so kindly remembered me on my birthday.

Much love to you all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
as Tuesday January 20th, 1948

My dear All,

Last week we had some excitement. The fire engine was called out on three successive days, neither was very serious but it did cause a great deal of excitement. Motor cars, cyclists and pedestrians flocked from everywhere to see the blaze. One fire was caused by a native servant wanting to help himself to some spirits of wine and struck a match at an unfortunate time whilst the Boss was out but there was not much damage done. This occurred in our street in the evening. The following evening we had quite a different sort of excitement. The neighbour exactly opposite our front gate was the cause. I had gone to bed about eight when I heard a lot of excited talk from people on the pavement and then we heard a scream for help and a police whistle. Ted at once rung up the police and before long, three constables were in the house. We all stood on the stoep waiting for developments. The row subsided but the next day we found out from the father of the family that two of his sons had been drinking and fighting and smashing up the place. He came over and told us his history afterwards. He is a railway engine driver who is on pension, has a family of six, these two boys had been to the war and a daughter also who was driving a heavy lorry all through the war. Dr had to be called in to attend the head of one boy. The case is to come before the magistrate this week. Both lads have promised to give up the drink.

We have had letters from Joe and Blodwen. Blodwen and the children got home on the 11th. The holiday did not do her much good as she was ill all the time and she says she should not have gone as she was ill before she started. However they are all safely home again and Joe is glad they are back. He found it very lonely whilst they were away. He often went up to Uncle Owen's and some nights he stayed there. They are now thinking of buying a semi-detached house which is much nearer to Uncle but further from his work. It is in Caledon Street which is near to the church. We shall be interested in hearing what they decide. The owner of the house they are in wants it for himself.

Harold arrived on Saturday evening. My, he is tall, can just stand in a doorway without scraping his head. He took the service in church on Sunday evening very acceptably. We are expecting Jean home tomorrow afternoon from Potgietersrus. They had just under two inches of rain in an hour the day after they got home. A lot of damage was done but their house seems to have escaped harm. On Sunday afternoon, the Howards came in from their plot and took us all out for afternoon tea. They have a very nice place. They are just as far from the town as Grace and Ted were from their plot but in the opposite direction. They call with their car every day to take me to church. The daughter, about Jean's age, plays the organ in church.

The men are getting on with the new room. The brickwork will be finished this week I guess. Harold does not go back to Bloemfontein until the 27th. He is very interested in photography and has a nice collection of snaps. He is trying an experiment in colouring the photos he takes in oil colours. Harold is staying with a Mr and Mrs Bain who knows Joe. He has also met Mrs Lohnmore, a relation of Mom's whom we visited when in Bloemfontein. She is a keen worker in the Boy Scout movement.

Grace has a lady coming to see her tomorrow with a view to taking a son of hers as a boarder. He is the same age as Charles. They are farmers and live not far from town. They are related to the Florences and came to see us with Una when Mrs Florence also called on us.

A kindly reference was made in the Stellander just to hand to my 84th birthday. I went to see the eye man this morning. He tested me with all the glasses that were in any way suitable for improving my vision but none were any better than what I have at present. He says I must be satisfied with these as no one can improve on them. I sincerely hope my eye does not get any less useful. Ted is still on what they call double shift, 14 hours a day. He is at the office at six a.m. has half an hour for breakfast, normally an hour for dinner but he generally only takes half or three quarters of an hour and Grace sends his supper to the office about six and sometimes he does not come home before nine but generally eight. Some of the younger hands are away on Defence Force training for a fortnight.

It is Monday evening. Charles has gone to a party at the Saunders (it is Trevor's birthday and he is sleeping there tonight.) Harold has taken Grace and Pam to the pictures so I am alone at present. I shall not be up late.

Tuesday morning 20th January. A nice bright morning, no rain during the night. Slept well and ready for a good work. Nothing special to report but I hope to receive a nice post when Ted comes home to breakfast. Yes, there is one item. Uncle Gervase's daughter, Roslin, (Mrs Derick Collett) has a daughter.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday January 26th, 1948

My dear All,

Nothing very tragic has happened during the past week. Jean had her 17th birthday yesterday. I won't say she has never been kissed, perhaps it would be more correct to say she had never refused to be kissed. She is studying very hard and hopes to pass her matric at the end of the year. She certainly deserves to.

Grace has agreed to take the lad, Neville Thompson, he is a little older than Charles, is in the same standard at school, they are both about the same height and so far get on very well together. He is well behaved and I think will be able to help each other in their lessons. I look at him and realise I was just about his age and size when I went to Croydon school as a boarder. I am surprised that I was sent so young. His parents live about 18 miles from town and are connected with the Florences. Grace is taking him on a quarterly basis. They share the garage and at present Harold is in the same room. Harold returns to his work in Bloemfontein on Thursday. He is very interested in his photography. He is experimenting with some new process of colouring his photos.

We have a good deal of rain during the week. On Friday afternoon it came down properly and Saturday and Sunday we were quite cold. I was glad that I had a cardigan to put on and kept it on all day and evening. Today it is nice and sunny. I was very disappointed not to go to the Church business meeting on Friday owing to the rain. Ted, Grace and Pam attended. I suggested getting a taxi but it was too late.

Saturday evening Ted brought home a postcard from Dot dated Friday saying she was afraid that Joan was getting whooping cough or mumps or both. When they were at Vryburg, some of the Hudson children had mumps and when they got home, her little playmate had whooping cough. We hope she will get over them without any after effects. Either is bad enough but to have both at the same time is much worse. We hope for better news.

Last Friday was Emily's birthday, we sent her a wire and are anxiously waiting for news. I did hear over the wireless that Vryburg had had good rains so I hope their mealie crop will be saved.

Joe has decided not to buy the house that was offered him. It was too old and in poor condition. I hope he will find something more to their requirements.

I have sent 19 (I think) snaps of some of the picnics we have been to as well as snaps of my room and ourselves. This will in time reach all of you and if you will mark on the back of any you may like to have, I will see what I can do about it.

I have spent a good deal of time during the past week in replying to those kind friends who wrote letters instead of cards at Xmas time. I have many more to write to yet. I am enclosing in various letters to you some that I think you will be interested in reading. Where I have written "D8" on them, you can destroy same. You may be interested in knowing that I posted 578 letters and cards. I still have a few cards left if any of you would like another.

It will be the thirtieth anniversary of Douglas and Evelyn's Wedding Day on Wednesday, 29th. Perhaps we shall hear some news then.

We hear some talk of Clifford bringing his mother here later on and taking her around to see her scattered children.

I have four large photos of our family taken in 1876, 1879 (2) and 1882. The size is approximately 16½ x 14½. They are not framed but they are very interesting. I think Aunt Eliza has the same set framed. I do not know what to do with them. They are all of my parents and brothers and sisters. They could be cut down to smaller dimensions by a few inches. Naturally they are of great interest to me.

Monday afternoon. There is no later news to hand today so will get on with some other letters. The brickwork of the new room is about finished but the recent rain is holding up the work. I am glad to say I am keeping well.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday February 3rd, 1948

My dear All,

I generally start my letter on Monday but could not do so yesterday as the typewriter was at hospital for the third time after being overhauled and paying two pounds ten for the supposed doing. However I hope it will be alright now.

The most important item of news is that last evening about nine, Douglas rang up to say that Emily has a son born and both were doing well. This now makes the third great grandchild. I have wired congratulations this morning.

Another important item of news from the same quarter is that Lynne's wedding is fixed for Easter Saturday March 27th. The ceremony and reception are to be held on the farm. Of course it could not be helped but it happens to be the anniversary of Mom's funeral. I do not expect to be there as there will sure to be such a crowd that accommodation will be strained to its utmost capacity. Douglas, Grace says, expressed the hope that Joe and I would visit Grass Ridge after the wedding festivities were over. I have written to Joe to ascertain what his plans are for his next holiday. Easter time is generally a nice time for travelling, not too hot or too cold. I still feel drawn to Fish River for May 6th, the annual Fete Day and I am wondering if I could not go through to Cape Town, leaving here at 7.30 a.m. and arriving at Cape Town the next morning about 11 without any changing of trains and only one night on the train. The return trip I should like to do would be via the Garden Routes to Uitenhage etc and call at Cradock and perhaps Grahamstown and if possible the Addo Game Reserve and thus pay a call on the Armstrongs who have extended an invitation some time ago. Last year when Harry Collett was in Cradock, he asked me to stay with them at Greyville. If way opened for me to attend the wedding, this could possibly be worked in by breaking the journey at Kimberley. However time will show if any such plan can be evolved.

Tomorrow would be Mom's 86th anniversary were she still with us. I often wonder if our loved ones know what is going on in this world.

Have I told you that Pam is having a lift to and from Port Elizabeth for her annual holiday which commences on March 13th. They have booked accommodation at Humewood Mansions. I hope some plan will be made whereby she will be able to see the Uitenhage folk, Joe and Blodwen and family as well as Uncle Owen and family. I have nearly finished answering my Xmas letters. There are only about half a dozen to do. It has been very interesting getting into touch with old friends again.

Last Saturday afternoon we spent at the Howard's plot where they had arranged a tennis afternoon. They fetched Grace and I whilst Pam and Jean went by another opportunity. There were a number of other visitors there including a Mr Dreyer, a teacher at the Public School and Mr and Mrs Liddell, relations of the Howards, to a young gent, Mr Sparkes by name. There was some very good tennis. Both Pam and Jean play a good game. We had a nice rain in the evening. The Liddells are descended from the 1820 Settlers and were interested in Mom's book containing the names of the various families that came out. There is to be a social on Thursday evening to welcome the new minister and his wife. They seem very nice people. They have been to see us already. Dot writes that Joan has neither mumps nor whooping cough, so that is something to be thankful for. Alan has gone back to school but was delayed a bit owing to having been in quarantine. They have had lots of rain up there. Cecily has gone back to school, she and June Short are to be the bridesmaids at Lynne's wedding.

I had a shock recently when Ted said he found me fast asleep one night and the light still burning and I had my glasses on and the book I had been reading on my lap. He took the glasses off and I knew nothing about it. I don't think I have ever done such a thing before (I was quite sober when I went to bed).

I have had a few twinges of cramp in the calf of my right leg recently. I don't know why. We had arranged for a picnic tea at the river last Wednesday but as rain was threatening, we returned home and had a picnic supper on the front stoep. In the evening Ted and I took Marjory Walker to the bio to see the picture "Our vines have tender grapes". It was a fairly good picture but

was too long for me and I felt queer before it was over but got home alright and a hot bottle at my feet had a good night and feel no worse for it now. It was cold in the hall.

Harold went back to Bloemfontein to work after his holiday. He is staying with very nice people, who remember Joe, Mrs Longman, a relation of Saunders who Mom and I met when in Bloemfontein attends the same church. Dot says that 23 out of 26 day old chicks are doing well, 14 of them are hens. Douglas and Evelyn had a happy day on their 30th Wedding Day anniversary. The little boy, Neville by name, who is boarding here is quite a nice little fellow. He always calls me Grandpa. He and Charles get on very well together. The brickwork of the new room is finished and electrical work is being started today. I must not attempt another sheet today so will say farewell for the present.

Love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday February 9th, 1948

My dear All,

It is a beautiful morning, a little on the cool side but nice and fresh. We have had rain during the past week and some hot days, so you see we get variety. February used to be reckoned as one of the hottest months of the year. That is one of the things of this life, we have to take it as it comes. I have at last finished answering my Xmas letters. It has been a pleasure to write to many who wrote to me at Xmas. Some of the letters I have sent to one another of the circle who may be interested in reading and then destroying them. I sincerely hope the time will never come when I shall be unable to read or write.

Mr and Mrs Thompson, parents of the little boy Neville who is staying here this quarter and going to school, came in on Friday afternoon and took both boys out to the farm for the weekend. They returned Sunday evening and attended church. They, the parents, had arranged to go to East London by car for a month's holiday, intending to take Neville with them. He is their only child. Ted and Grace advised then not to do so as it would interfere too much with his schooling and Ted had obtained news from East London that there had been 19 fresh cases of infantile paralysis at East London during the week so that at the last moment, this decided them to leave the lad behind. Of course he is disappointed but Ted has promised to take him to see the circus when it comes here. The lads have enjoyed their time on the farm, Charles explains that the horse he was to ride did not know him and consequently would not go.

The social welcome to the new minister and his wife on Thursday evening was quite nice. Canon Gould (late of Cradock) and other ministers took part in the proceedings. The D.R. Minister was absent owing to his wife's indisposition. Ted made a very good speech. Grace and other ladies were responsible for the refreshments etc. I was introduced to the Mayor who has promised to let me see their waterworks and other municipal undertakings. The Council has just received authority to raise a loan of about £800 000 for improvements. The town is growing very rapidly. It is the nearest important business centre to the new goldfields. Yesterday afternoon, Ernest Saunders took us to his home for afternoon tea and also showed me some of the new extensions of the town. Ernest was responsible for laying out the large airfield and drome. He took me into one of these – I had never been in one before – and was surprised at their immense dimensions. The South African Railways is now in occupation of the place and it is being used as a training centre for railway employees. The Railway is building a large number of houses for their staff which means spreading the town out considerably. House property is difficult to get. A Mr Biggs has charge of a large part of the work.

I see by the Midland News that Godfrey Collett has another daughter. I suppose there will be an account of Una Brown's wedding, which took place at Fish River on Saturday, will duly appear in the News. Clifford tells me he is going to Groenkloof shortly to take charge there whilst George and Hilda got to Pretoria to see their new grandchild – Roslin's baby. Denis and Dee move into their own house about 20th. It is near Kingswood where Denis is teaching. Ruth also tells me that Dee's father, Bishop Ferguson-Davie, has recently got married again to a widow of 60 in Maritzburg. The builder is busy putting down the floor in the new room. He says he will be finished with the room this week. I am waiting to hear from Joe if he has any plans for his holiday. If not and if I am not going to Lynne's wedding, I think I shall venture a trip to Cape Town, Uitenhage, perhaps Grahamstown, Addo Game Reserve, Cradock, Fish River etc and back again.

Post has only brought a postcard from Mary about the hearing aid I got for Mom. At present I have sent it to Mr Sowden on appro and as soon as I hear from him, will let Aunt Letty try it.

My post has greatly reduced lately, but is very seldom that there is no post for me. We sometimes talk about getting a motorcar but at present there is no accommodation for one. I am not much in favour of second-hand cars. We had a nice rain on Saturday afternoon. Grace and the girls went to the bio in the evening and enjoyed the picture. They only got home about midnight. Ted and I went to bed. I am glad to say Ted is not on double shift at present. His hours now are from 8 to 5 but it is often seven or later before he gets home. It is now just 11 a.m. as there will not be any

more post today, so will ring off. Lots of love to all. Hope to hear of Emily and baby being home soon. Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday February 16th, 1948

My dear All,

My typewriter is working better since I returned it to the firm who overhauled it some weeks ago. It is not perfect now but I fear to send it back again in case it might come back worse. Pam will be 19 tomorrow. She is looking forward to her holiday next month. Some friends of the family in Johannesburg who are motoring to Humewood have offered her a seat in their car and arrangements have been made for her to share a room with one of their daughters, so she will be in safe keeping. I hope she will be able to see something of Joe and Blodwen and children during her stay. No doubt Joe will get in touch with her after she arrives which will be about March 17th. Address - Humewood Mansions.

I expect Emily and her baby are either at her home or at Grass Ridge. Baby is to be christened next Sunday – Leslie Miles Butler. He was born on February 2nd. He weighed 7 lbs 14 ozs and is reported to be quite a good boy. Douglas and Evelyn say they are having quite a lot of chaff on being raised to the honour of grandparents. Evelyn and Rex are at present in Queenstown doing necessary shopping. Rex is looking for cattle and may go as far as Grahamstown and Alice.

Joe has not said if he is going to the wedding and has not made any plans about taking his holiday for this year. He is having trouble with his landlord who wants two pounds extra rent per month now that he has done up the house. Joe would like to build but cannot do that and provide three bedrooms etc under £2000 at least, nor has he been able to see one already built that he can buy. Blodwen, too, is in doctor's hands who says she should get away for a change free of the care of the children. So they have their problems too.

I have asked Aunt Emmie to see if she can secure a room nearby where I could sleep if I go to Cape Town. She has not been well for some time and her Dr says she should lie on her back each day for half of the day. It is three or four years since I saw her last. I do not class myself an invalid anymore and am quite competent to travel alone, especially when I am on a through fast train. However we will see what plan to make nearer the time. Tomorrow it will be four years since Mr Thomas died. I am glad to hear that Mrs Mayhew is willing to stay with Aunt Eliza until the end of March. Mary is still at Graaff Reinet. Aunt Letty has seven great grandchildren to my three. I think she has twenty-one grandchildren to my 18. She keeps very well considering she is only 93. Rev Hornabrook will be 98 next month.

The new room is nearing completion. The floor and ceiling and windows are fixed up, the colour-washing of walls will be done this week and the electric light is being attended to today. There are still some other jobs to be done and they all take time.

Aunt Emmie will be 82 on 23rd, Evelyn also has her anniversary on 27th and Dee on 24th, Pam's tomorrow.

Irene (Short) says they have had twelve inches of rain this season, presumably from October, which sounds very good but they still want a good deal more. We hear that Eric and Freda have been to Johannesburg for a few days recently. Uncle Owen has another granddaughter, Mrs Tilly is at Walmer at present.

The snaps taken at Xmas have not yet reached me. Please hurry them up. I do not know where the block has occurred. My correspondence has considerably lessened since Christmas but I still get a few letters from old friends. I see by the Midland there was a big crowd at Una Brown's wedding on 7th at Fish River. There was no mention of Aunt Agnes, I wonder if she was well enough to be there. Had a nice letter from Mr West (Cradock). He and his wife had a nice time at Cape Town except that his brother passed away shortly after their arrival. I have not heard a word from Uncle Gervase since leaving Cradock. Clifford writes that he is going to look after Groenkloof whilst Hilda and George go to see Roslin and her baby. I hope I may see them as they pass through. I do not know if they are going by car or train. Ted is not working on double shift now as they have a full staff at present. 14 hours a day is far too much for a man of his age. Of course the overtime money is very acceptable but what is the use of that if your health suffers in consequence.

We are still having some hot days but the nights are generally cool. I notice appreciable difference in the hours of daylight. I still rise at six and go to bed about nine, sometimes eight. Grace is going into town so will post this for me. Lots of love, Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday February 24th, 1948

My dear All,

I did not do a dear all yesterday as I knew that David and Norman would be passing through by train on their way to Rhodes University and might have news to tell. Their train was up to time, 6.50 pm. And we had a quarter of an hour with them. They were both looking well. Norman is more than half the height of David but is thin. Norman I think is stouter in comparison, both look well and happy.

Ruth writes that Evelyn and Rex spent 24 hours with them and greatly enjoyed their visit. Denis has moved into their new house which he recently purchased. In case any of you have forgotten to make a note of the address (as I did) here it is again. "Cotswold", 15 Fitzroy Street, Grahamstown. Congratulations to Denis on having passed his first part of his M.A. degree. He still has to write his thesis to complete. No doubt he will also pass this. Milner Brown is a grandfather. His eldest daughter, Hilary, has a daughter.

I wonder if all of you read Ruth's article in the Outspan of 13th February on Leap Year. It was quite good, much commonsense.

It is possible that when Lynne is on her honeymoon, they may pass through Kroonstad. No doubt we shall hear in good time if this is so. It will be some compensation for not attending the wedding. She is to have a month's holiday before resuming her work at the office. They have secured a flat in Queenstown. The latest report about Mrs Collen is that she is very ill and Lynne does not think she can live much longer. She is suffering great pain.

A few days ago I called on Mr Fitzhenry, brother of Mrs Armstrong who lived near us in Dundas Street. He works at the standard Bank. He says he and his wife will call here. Grace knows them.

I was asked to take the junior Bible class last Friday as Rev Griffiths was visiting out of town. There were about a dozen present. Afterwards Grace took me to see a patient relative of the Howards who had a sudden operation for appendicitis the previous Sunday. He is now up but not out of the hospital.

Florrie's daughter, Ruth, has a son born in Pretoria on February 12th. His name is David Frederick Behrens. Mary is due back in Cradock about 28th but I do not know exactly what her plans are for the future.

I have made enquiries regarding the cost of a tourist ticket from here to Cape Town, then Uitenhage, then perhaps Grahamstown, Cradock, Fish River and back to here. I have not received a reply yet. I have made some alteration to my room. The big bookcase instead of being right in the corner is now in front of the door leading into the bathroom. This gives me more wall space and I need not use that door as the other door is just nearby in the front passage. The curtains that were in the long passage at 34 are now hanging in front of the front window. Grace required hers for the new room that is nearing completion. The curtains do very well and look very nice. A new lavatory is now in course of erection. On Friday afternoon we experienced a sharp thunderstorm. One flash of lightning very vivid and all of us thought the house or some near building was struck. The clap of thunder was so violent that it shook the house. However nothing happened but it was one of the heaviest I have ever experienced. A town about 40 miles from here had the same storm but even worse. There hailstones the size of tennis balls were reported and six inches of rain registered in some parts. Thousands of panes of glass were reported having been broken. We are thankful we escaped such an experience.

I am sorry to hear that Terblanche, who works the linotype at Midland News had the misfortune to get his right hand injured in the machine and two of the fingers on his right hand had to be amputated. I do not know how he will be able to work the machine again.

Aunt Emmie had her 82nd birthday yesterday. Have not heard how the day was celebrated but I guess it was much the same as other days. She has not been well for some time and I feel it my duty to go and see her. I have asked her to try and find a place where I can sleep and eat as near as convenient to her home. Aunt Eliza does not approve of my going anywhere.

Canon Gould, formerly Minister (Anglican) in Cradock, went down to open the lichgate recently erected to the memory of members of the Church who fell in the last war. He came to see me on Monday after his return. He had supper at the Poplars and is loud in his praise of the comfort etc he found the new house. He remarked on the growth of the town etc. I also had a long letter from Mr Stock. I must stop now, lots of love to all,

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Saturday February 28th, 1948

My dear All,

Things are happening, perhaps not exactly according to plan. I appreciated the expressions of fear regarding my going to Cape Town alone but after consulting my Dr, he assures me that I need have no fear on that account. There will be no changing of trains etc. I quite agree that there is some difficulty regarding suitable accommodation and getting about in the crowded city. Douglas has suggested asking Clifford if he would go (at my expense of course). It is quite out of the question for either Grace or Dot to undertake the task. Douglas is far too busy to get away. Not only has he the farms to see to but many other big responsibilities on his shoulders. Joe, too, has not had confirmation of his appointment and as soon as it does come, he will be anxious to get a house of his own. I have to give the matter a lot of thought and at one time almost decided to give up the trip without anymore attempt at planning. But I do feel that I should go as I am certainly in better health than I have been for a long while and whilst I have the strength and desire to see my family, I want to do it.

Joe and Blodwen have written that a visit in March would be convenient. Billy is employed on the Railway and his month's holiday falls due in April. Her two sisters are also needing a change and have arranged to go to a guest farm and would travel with Billy. Billy is more or less an invalid and needs great care.

One suggestion I have thought of is to reverse my tour and go to Cradock, say about the middle of April, visit the farms and leave as soon as convenient after the Fete for Grahamstown or Uitenhage, arriving at Uitenhage about 10th of May. From there to Cape Town would be an easy trip as from here to Cape Town. No changing of trains and only one night. Perhaps the greatest difficulty has always been the accommodation and getting about in Cape Town. The idea came to me in the night watches, why not ask Miss Ruby Adendorff, a great temperance worker (she taught Dot music at Vryburg) and lives at Mowbray. Mr and Mrs West (Cradock) stayed with her for a month or more about Xmas time and I feel sure she would be willing to assist. In any case, I am going to write to her by this post and explain the position and await developments.

I had a letter from Clifford by yesterday's post. He has been looking after Groenkloof whilst George and Hilda have been on holiday to Port Alfred. A letter too came from Miss Rosa Ensor, Australia. She has been very ill and does not think she will be able to write again.

I will not attempt to fill this sheet but wanted to let you know what was happening.

Love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Wednesday March 3rd, 1948

My dear All,

For a wonder there is no post today from anyone for me. I had a letter last evening from Dot replying to my dear all of Saturday last. On Monday afternoon I had a wire from Aunt Emmie saying it was difficult to find accommodation for me but was still trying. If it cannot be managed, I must be contented to stay where I am and recognise that it was not intended that I should go. No doubt I shall hear something definite in due course. I have provisionally booked my seat but that can be cancelled at short notice. If I don't go to Cape Town till after May 6th (Fish River Fete), I would give a fortnight to each, Uitenhage and Cape Town. It would be getting rather late for travelling in June on account of winter weather in Cape Town.

Today the schools are having a holiday as it is their sports day. Grace and I may go and see them this afternoon. On the back of Dot's letter, she said that Mrs T.B. Collen died on February 26th. Lynne will miss her very much. Yesterday I had a letter from Mr West, Cradock, telling me of the death of Mr Fox who took my place at Louis Botha House. He was about 70 I think. For the last three years he has written verses for my Xmas cards under the initials A.W.F. I was looking to seeing him if I went to Cape Town. He was a woodwork teacher in Kimberley and Joe was under him at that time.

Amongst old letters I have been destroying, I have come across an offer I made in 1942 to a party who wanted to buy No. 34 Dundas Street. He did not bite then. The house realised over £700 more than my offer of 1942. I also came across a verbatim report of Gipsy Smith's sermon he preached in the Feather Market Hall, Port Elizabeth on 11th September 1904. Harold was with me then.

Mrs Ralls, who was a Miss Ulyate and lived opposite Saltpansdrift, wrote asking me if I could get some financial aid from Aunt Jessie for publishing a book she has written on the old settlers. She did not know that Aunt Jessie had passed on. I have tried some others who I thought might help but without success. Joan Collett that has been visiting Grass Ridge with her husband and baby recently. Baby weighed 9½ lbs at two months. Aunt Kate invites me to go to Grass Ridge any time I like. Of course I shall try to see her if I go to Fish River.

Pam's holiday starts on 6th but she only leaves for Port Elizabeth on Tuesday next. Grace has been busy with the sewing machine. I think I must get her a small electric motor to work the machine. Dot has had a dose of flu lately and she is considerably overworked with so many outside engagements. I am having my three cloth suits dry cleaned for eventualities. Grace's servant left on Monday without notice, or rather gave notice then left the same day. Fortunately another maid of substantial dimensions has arrived this morning. The new room is about finished, the room and lavatory is still in course of erection and may be finished about the end of the month. We have had some cool nights and mornings. One day recently I kept my cardigan on all day. I have the eiderdown and two blankets in reserve so shall be quite warm enough for the winter. I also have the electric heater I had in Cradock if needed.

A Mr Wilson, one of the Sunday School teachers, works at the largest store in town and I was shopping there on Monday and he asked me how I was going home. I said walking of course. He said it was too far so he asked his boss, Mr Fairweather, if I could go in his car. This was brought out and one of the staff instructed to drive me home. The car cost over £1000, the swankiest car I have ever been in unless I count the Royal car I travelled in with Princess Alice and Princess Helena Louise from Cape Town to Observatory when they came to have a look over the YMCA. It was very kind of Mr Fairweather. I have never met him yet but will call on him when next in town.

Teachers meetings are generally held here on Thursday evenings. I have attended two such meetings. On Sunday evening a Mrs Nunn, who is in the choir, was in her usual place apparently in her usual health. However she died in her sleep the same night. Her son is in the same theological class with David at Rhodes. He had only recently returned to University. Her son took a couple of services here during the holidays. "In the midst of life we are in death."

Douglas phoned from Bloemfontein on Tuesday afternoon. Grace was at the funeral and I was in town but he got in touch with Ted at the Office. There was no important news to communicate but it is always nice to hear his voice. Now I see the paper is about run out and I am about run dry so I had better stop. Grace is out collecting church subs at the moment.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday March 9th, 1948

My dear All,

There seems to be some misunderstanding regarding my proposed trip. So far there is nothing definitely settled. The original idea I had was to go to Cape Town and round by Uitenhage, Grahamstown, Cradock and ending with Fish River Fete on May 6th. This I suggested reversing the order as it was not convenient to visit Uitenhage in April. This may perhaps still be carried out. I have now heard from Miss Adendorff at Mowbray that she is not available, her house is a double storey and is not near to Aunt Emmie though both are in the Mowbray area. So that is off. I quite realise that it would be necessary to have some escort when going into Cape Town but that would not be often. I have no fear for the actual train journeys – that is simple, there would be no need to get out of the saloon the whole way. Aunt Emmie is still trying to secure accommodation near her and if this is not obtainable, I must give up the idea for some more convenient time. No comment has come from Uitenhage regarding the suggested exchange of homes during the Xmas school holidays, there is plenty of time before that comes.

Yesterday invitations to Lynne's wedding on 27th were received. I shall not be there but wish them everything of the best. I shall write later when they will be at Grass Ridge. I hope the weather will be fine for them and everything passes off to the satisfaction of all concerned.

The snaps taken here about Xmas and my birthday and sent for inspection have apparently got hung up somewhere. I shall be glad to have them returned so that I can execute the orders for same.

Aunt Emmie has on the advice of her Dr given up her long cherished hope of paying a visit to Muriel at Maritzburg. I now how disappointed she is and sympathise with her, that is one more reason that I still hope to see her sometime at Cape Town.

On 11th instant, Rev Hornabrook passed his 98th birthday. I think he is the oldest Minister living. The mornings are getting darker every day. The sun does not rise until after six but I get some reflected light from windows on the opposite side of the road. Grace tells me I must not get up at six during the winter but stay and have breakfast in bed. I am not an invalid any more, I am glad to say. Pam and Jean and Charles have to be at work or school by about quarter to eight. Ted is on early shift at present and is at the office at six, home for dinner about 1.30 and has the afternoon free.

We hear from Dot that Norman has settled in nicely at Rhodes. David was able to secure a second-hand gown for him for £2. They have to wear this in class. New scholars have to carry a placard round their neck stating which "house" they are billeted and the name of their previous school. I don't know how long this is kept up. Evelyn and Rex, when they went to Grahamstown from Queenstown recently, could not get accommodation so Denis and Dee kindly fixed them up for the night. Both the babies are doing very well, Evelyn says.

Mrs Legg is now living in Durban and her son who has been resident in East London for some years has now been transferred to Durban. He is employed on the South African Railways & Harbours.

Pam leaves here on Saturday morning. Her friends, Mr and Mrs Barnes and daughters, arrive here from Johannesburg about 8 and all have breakfast, then stop at Bloemfontein for dinner and sleep at Colesberg. It is not decided if they will go through Cradock to Grahamstown or direct to Port Elizabeth. They should arrive in Port Elizabeth on Sunday afternoon.

Love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday March 15th, 1948

My dear All,

I am in a quandary as to know what is the best to be done with regard to my suggested holiday. Late on Saturday I received a hurried note from Aunt Emmie saying a neighbour had found a room that would be available shortly – date not mentioned. Aunt Emmie has written to Grace wanting to know the opinion of the family as she does not want any responsibility if things do not go according to plan. The responsibility would be entirely my own. If the original plan could have been carried out, I should not hesitate. My seat is provisionally booked for April 3rd and I should not stay more than a fortnight in Cape Town. I could go on from there to Cradock via De Aar and visit Cradock and finish up at Fish River about May 6th which would cut out going to Uitenhage. I would not like to be in Cape Town in May or June on account of weather conditions. However, I suppose I had better follow the maxim I used to do when running the Midland News “if in doubt leave out”. Perhaps if I am spared for another year, I may be able to carry out my plans without incurring unnecessary anxiety for anyone else. So please consider everything as being off. I have already typed a letter to an old friend in Cape Town who might have been able to assist with a guide or escort but I will cancel same before posting the letter. I appreciate the anxious care you have all shown on my behalf and am very sorry not to carry it out.

A letter from Lynne came on Saturday saying she was going home for a fortnight before the wedding and having another fortnight after the event. Last evening (Sunday), Douglas and Lynne phoned. The conversation was very indistinct but in her letter she says they will call here on Sunday morning at about ten on their way to the South Coast, Durban, where the honeymoon is to be spent. I had planned my tour to start the following week. However we shall look forward to seeing them on Sunday 28th.

We have had lots of rain. On Friday it had been arranged that pupils of the local schools should go by train, starting about four a.m. Saturday to a neighbouring small town for inter-town sports. Jean was going but the rain came down in torrents about midnight so that Grace decided that it was best for her to cut it out. Quite a train full of children did go but came back about mid-day as it was too wet to do anything. A good deal of phoning was done before making the decision. We were also anxious about Pam as her friends were due to arrive by car from Johannesburg about 7.30 and have breakfast here and go as far as Colesberg and sleep there, completing the journey to Humewood by Sunday afternoon. They caught the rain at about five and arrived here on time. We have not heard how they got on but by wireless news there has been heaps of rain all down the country. Louisvale had an inch and a half in a few minutes, rivers are reported full etc.

Last week I practically finished hanging my pictures. I have over sixty hanging round the room, mostly family groups. I don't suppose they will please everyone but it does make the room homely. We hear from Cape Town that Eric Fear is trying to sell his farm and get a smaller one nearer a town. Ernest Saunders' wife is away at East London trying to fix up some plan for the accommodation for her mother there. Mrs Pearce is also away at Johannesburg to see her son and daughter-in-law, Miss Farren. Both these grass widowers had dinner here and enjoyed it needless to say. A postcard from Mary dated Graaff Reinet 9th, says she was in doctor's hands with a very severe headache which the Dr could not then diagnose. She would not be able to return to Cradock as anticipated. I hope some satisfactory arrangement has been made for Aunt Eliza in the meantime. A few lines from Ruth this morning says she finds it necessary to take up her Red Cross work again from a financial point of view. I am sorry. Both her grandchildren are flourishing. David and Norman had supper with them last Sunday 7th and seemed to be settling down quite nicely. The weather here is nice and cool after the recent rains. No word so far from Pam but no doubt she got through without any mishap. I have had a long letter from Mr Stock hoping to see me but that is all off now. I shall have quite a number of letters to write to various people I was looking to meet. I am glad to say I am still keeping well, not felt so well for a long time. I am not an invalid, but I cannot do much walking for any distance. I do get to town now and then without much exertion. Lots of love and regretting any anxiety I may have caused you regarding my tour.

Yours as ever, Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday March 22nd, 1948

My dear All,

Time is on the wing and in less than a week Lynne will be married. I had a postcard from her this morning asking for the loan of the two flags I had in Cradock. They must have been sold with the rest of the furniture. We are of course looking forward to seeing the young couple on Sunday morning about ten. They will have covered over 1000 miles by car by the time they get back to Queenstown. Kingsley arrives from Stellenbosch on Saturday morning and leaves again for College the next evening. A long way to travel for so short a visit.

They have had a good deal of rain and the country is looking very fine. Farmers have had too much. We here have had plenty but a neighbouring village had far more than they could cope with. Their streets were turned into rivers and a great deal of damage was done. Aunt Emmie reports lots of rain at Cape Town. Mary has not communicated to us what is the matter with her head. We hear that she is staying with Uncle Gervase and Aunt Rouena for the present. Mrs Mayhew was supposed to leave Cradock at the end of March but we have not heard what plans have been made for someone to fill her place.

There is nothing to report from this end. I am still feeling well but with a sharp return of cold weather last week, my nose began troubling again. Bi-carbonate of soda gave quick relief. Today is warm again but I shall keep to the warmer underclothing I started yesterday. Ernest Saunders took us for a spin yesterday afternoon. He drove us round the convent which is beautifully situated on the bank of the river just outside the town. There are quite a number of nice places about. I am hoping to go with one of our friends who is in insurance and visits a number of towns in the neighbourhood on business. I have offered to open the gates for him. As a matter of fact, there are no gates to open.

Douglas has made special improvements for the forthcoming wedding. The gate from the main road has been removed and a large grid, which will operate from both directions and so avoid visitors the trouble of getting out of their car, has been erected. Next Sunday, Easter Day, a special early morning service is being held at the river pavilion at quarter to 7. All the free churches will attend. The Salvation Army band is in attendance. The ordinary services will be at 11 and 7.30. Another service will follow at 8.45. I was asked to give a temperance address in the church yesterday morning to the Sunday School. On Thursday evening the teachers' preparation class was held at the home of one of the lady teachers who lives about two to three miles out. Two full carloads went out. The meetings are generally held here.

I have had the typewriter overhauled again by the same man that was in Cradock before I left (Garlakes). I am sorry I did not know from the start that he was here. I hope I shall not have any more trouble with it now.

Joe has made application to the Rend Board for a reduction of his rent from £10-10s but have not heard the result. Blodwen was rather better when we last heard. A couple of cards have come from Pam. We hope Joe and family will be able to see something of her. They have had one wet day.

Schools break up on Wednesday. Charles' friend returned to school last week and goes home on Wednesday for about ten days. The two boys get on very well together. They are in the same standard.

The boys are waiting to take this to the post so must close, hoping the wedding passes off according to plan. There will be a number of snaps to be sent round after the event. The local photographer from Vryburg is going out for the occasion.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
(Saturday) March 27th, 1948

My dear All,

It is Saturday morning, exactly at this time last year we were all gathered round Mother's open grave at Cradock. The happenings of that week will never be effaced from my memory. I have been living it all over again for the most part in the solitude of my room. How often I have expressed the wish that I had known some time beforehand that the end was so near as there are so many things which I wish I had talked over with her. I have these matters on my mind but I realised that her strength was failing and she could not stand the strain. Just before the end came, Mom opened her eyes just for a moment but did not speak and she breathed no more. Everything happened so suddenly. At ten minutes past two she breathed her last and by four o'clock her body was removed to the funeral parlour and I never saw her again.

It is now Easter Monday, bank holiday. I was quite unable to continue my letter Saturday. I must do so today so that you can get it on Wednesday if the post is collected today.

We have had lots of rain. Last Thursday the river came down in flood. As a rule, either Grace or Mrs Walker or both go out to the farm just beyond the old plot to get half a sheep for the joint supply of meat for the following week, using Mrs Walker's car since Ted has sold his. On this occasion we went on Thursday as Friday being Good Friday was considered as a Sunday. We had a good look at the river, all the picnic spots where we had our holidays during Xmas and New Year were under water. The rowing boats had been drawn up onto the banks to avoid them being washed down the river. The water had risen to the doors of the boathouse. It had not been so high for years. The heavy rain had fallen further up where about six inches had fallen in a few hours. It rained again heavily during the night but we all went to service at 10 a.m. More rain fell and we wondered how they were faring at the farm with all their preparations for the wedding. I wired them on Saturday telling them that the roads were likely to be bad but hoping they were having it fine. We were glad to learn on the arrival of Lynne and Gerry that they had perfect sunshine all day on Saturday. Our thoughts were naturally with them all day. Grace and I, having been there as recently as November, were able to picture all the activities that were going on. The plan was that the bridal party would be arriving here about ten on Sunday morning but we were not surprised to get a phone call from Lynne about eight from Wolmeransstad saying the roads were very wet and they did not think they could arrive before about noon. We all went to early service on the riverbank at 6.45 as the women had been early at the sepulchre on the resurrection morning. Rain had fallen during the night and consequently the ground was very wet and the attendance not as large as no doubt it would otherwise have been. Rev Griffiths called for me with his car, the others went on their bikes. We took a folding chair for me and we all sat on the bandstand which was the driest spot. I was well wrapped up and am glad to say did not catch cold. The Salvation Army band – twelve instruments - played several hymns very nicely. Both the Methodist and Presbyterian ministers gave appropriate addresses. The sun rose whilst the service was in progress. It was very impressive. I was up at 5.30 and we had breakfast when we got back from service. Douglas phoned about ten thirty to enquire if the bridal party had arrived and he was glad to hear that they had got as far as they had without incident. Grace and I did not go to the eleven o'clock service but waited the arrival of Lynne and her husband. I sat for some time in the little bit of shade at the front gate but Grace thought it too hot there so came onto the stoep. We were all on the look out for them and just exactly at one they arrived. It appears that owing to the heavy mud they had encountered, the pipe conveying the petrol under the car had become detached and some gallons of petrol had leaked. With the help of another traveller following them, they managed to fix the matter up for the time being but being Sunday, they could not get it properly done. We were glad to hear that the wedding had passed off according to plan. About 100 guests were present, a number of cameras were on the job and no doubt we shall all see the results in due course. The weather was perfect and everyone happy. There were many telegrams and presents and my telegram was read out. Of course, we all had dinner together and they were off again by 2.40. Lynne seemed very pleased with my room and thought everything was very nice. They both were looking very well and happy. Up to the time of writing – now three p.m., we have not heard how far they got last night but they

expected to get to Margate sometime this afternoon. I tried to phone to Douglas but the line was out of order and could not get through. I must not start another sheet but will try to write again shortly. It has been a sad time for me but am thankful everything has gone off so well.

Love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday April 5th, 1948

My dear All,

We have not heard a word from the honeymooners but presume they are still at Margate. I understood from Lynne that she was due at work on 13th. There is a nice report of the wedding in the *Stellander* which arrived this morning. As Reg and Dot already get the paper, I will send my copy to Joe and he can send it on to Cradock, Grahamstown and Cape Town. Douglas has written quite a nice account too which I will repeat here. Douglas says:

“About five a.m. I was returning from the station with Gerry, Kingsley and Fuller, the Best Man and while mending a puncture, it began to rain. You can imagine how we felt but it soon cleared up and a perfect day developed. The front stoep had been arranged for the service, seating about eighty and many people had to stand. The old red carpet from the church was borrowed and laid down the centre and extended nearly to the boys’ room. The altar was consisted of Dad’s 21st birthday present – the davenport. It was draped and one lovely rose, the only flower on it. The piano – operated by Mrs Blake, the Minister’s wife, was in the porch. Lynne (on the wrong arm of her old Father) came out of the boys’ room alongside of the stoep and up the aisle to the altar where Gerry was of course waiting. She was punctual to the half minute! Cecily and June acted as bridesmaids and Fuller of Queenstown as Best Man. Rev Blake officiated. Printed hymn sheets “The voice that breathed o’er Eden” and “O perfect Love, all human thoughts transcending” were sung. The ceremony was as solemn as though in a Church. Many people remarked on this. After the service, the signing of the registers was done in the lounge and Lynne, Gerry and attendants passed down the aisle and through the house to the front steps where we received our guests. The crowd, over 150, went down the front steps into the garden and lawns where photographs were taken. The cine camera jammed so we do not know what the results will be like. Only part of one film was used. If suitable, this will be passed round in due course. While the photos were being taken, the stoep was rearranged by many helpers and bride and groom sat at the corner of the stoep facing both front and side stoeps. A bell, decorated with flowers, was suspended from an arch of reeds under which the bride and groom sat, parents and appendages sat along the sides. Teddie Pentz was Master of Ceremonies, Rev Blake toasted the bride and groom. Gerry replied very well and suitably. Gordon Slattery toasted parents of bride and groom. Yours truly replied on behalf of the parents. Ian Angus, Blackwood’s son-in-law, the bridesmaids and the Best Man, replied suitably. Tom van der Merwe of Potchefstroom – ex Land Bank Manager – proposed the toast of absent friends and referred particularly to Dad and Molly and Mike. The bride wore ---! The father of the bride wore --- a buttonhole! For the description of the dresses, you must imagine. There were no accidents and many of our friends attended. Among Lynne’s wedding presents was a book of history of weddings and events of married life. She asked Mollie Hudson to get the guests to sign and 150 signatures were obtained. Quite a few were missed. Lynne and Gerry left in my old Plymouth crate for Margate about six p.m. and got as far as Wolmaransstad on their way to see Dad, Grace and family. Heavy rains in the district prevented some people from coming. We all went into town later in the evening for a cricket dance. The grandparents did not dance but got home about 2 a.m., tired out but content that we had done our duty to our eldest daughter and hoping for their happiness and success as useful citizens of our country.”

Lynne told me that the only telegram of congratulations that was read was the one I sent here as follows “May God’s richest blessing rest upon you bringing love, peace, happiness into your lives. From Grandpa Butler and Irons family.” I have a number of notes of other matters I should like to refer to but it is nearly four and there will not be time to mention all or to start another sheet. A wire came on Thursday morning from Ernest as follows: “Have sold business and premises to Mr Talbot, Editor Natal Witness and Magazine *Libertas*. Handing over tomorrow. Love.” I wired my congratulations.

Lynne brought us a nice slab of the wedding cake. It was very nice. Pam arrived home yesterday just at dinner time. Her friends left at 2.30 for their home in Johannesburg. Pam is looking very well, has not put on any weight. Spend Good Friday with Joe and Family. Blodwen still not well. I will get what I have written and will try to do another sheet tomorrow. There may be more news to tell. We are all keeping well, not frost yet but cool nights and mornings.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday April 6th, 1948

My dear All,

There is the desire to finish off what I was not able to do when I posted my usual dear all yesterday. It is late in the afternoon so I shall not post this before Wednesday when there may be more news to add. The afternoon sun shines right on my back at my desk but as I do most of my typing at the side table, it does not worry me. I get the reflection of the sun first thing in the morning from the windows of the house right opposite me. The curtains that were hanging in the long passage at 34, near the bathroom, exactly fit the bay window here and I have fixed up the runners just as we had them in our bedroom, so that by pulling on string, they either open or close simultaneously.

My Dr called to see me a few mornings ago – not professionally – but he wanted some advice as to how to go about opposing an application from one of the sporting clubs that wanted to apply for a liquor licence. I had to keep him waiting for a few minutes and he enjoyed looking at the photos and pictures on my walls and thought they were most interesting. So do I. I hope I was able to help him. On 8th will be the anniversary of Ruth and Harold's wedding day. I have written to her. On Denis' birthday, Ruth entertained 11 young people to tea, they included David, Norman, Jeffrey and Valerie. They had a jolly time. Joe has booked provisionally for December 16th to January 16th at Kuurboom River near Knysna. They can get accommodation there for £10 per month – provisions of course extra.

Charles brought home a little while ago some jumping seeds in a matchbox. I have never seen anything like them. They are little round white things, smaller than the Australian bug which you find on vines and other plants. Really they are a very small worm encased and they are capable of springing an inch or so high. He brought home a branch with many on. They seem to grow under the bark of the plant in clusters. When I get a little more time, I am going to send a specimen to the Government Entomologist to find out what they are. Alan was home for the short holidays and had an excellent report from his teacher. He is about nine months younger than the average of the boys in his class. He is very keen on cricket and hopes next year to be in the first team. I forget if I referred in my last to Aunt Emmie having two bad heart attacks recently. The last was whilst attending the nine o'clock service on Good Friday morning at the mission hall just across the road from her house. Emmie has been free from these attacks for some months. Joe's appointment has not yet been confirmed. He says another party at Durban is having a similar experience. It must be very unsettling for the parties concerned. He is still looking for a suitable house costing about £1600. The rent of his house has been raised another pound a month. The Owner applied to the Rent Board to raise the rent by four pounds a month but they refused.

I have received an official invitation to attend the special Council for the election of Mayor on Thursday afternoon. I think I have forgotten to say that Lynne brought us a nice slab of wedding cake. It was not too rich and has been much enjoyed. The new owner of the Midland News has a very sensible article in his first issue and I hope he will specialise in giving local news. In a letter from Mary, addressed to Aunt Eliza received this afternoon, she fears that it may take some months before she is properly well. I wrote to the Premier Hotel recently to enquire if they had accommodation for me for a week or so and they replied this morning that I could have a room from 14th to 22nd so I have wired to Joe to see if he would come to Craddock and spend the weekend with me there. I am awaiting his reply. If he says yes, I will probably go down this day next week and stay over the Fish River Fete and visit about there for a week or so and come straight back here. I want to see about closing in the grave plot and erecting a headstone over Mother's grave. If you have any suggestions to make as to the wording, I shall be glad to have them. It is now Wednesday afternoon 7th. At one p.m. I received a wire from Joe saying he will meet me next Wednesday 14th at the Premier if he can get accommodation on the train. I have wired to the Premier booking the room so all being well, by this time next week Joe and I should be together. I expect Joe will return to Uitenhage by the Sunday evening train. My further movements I will let you know. I have booked my seat and hope it will be alright. We had our first frost last night. My electric heater is already in case it is wanted. Love to all, Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
as Monday April 12th, 1948

My dear All,

As I am leaving for Cradock on Tuesday evening, I must get a move on so as to get this off Monday afternoon. I have not started packing but shall take as little luggage as possible. Of course the typewriter must go and my attaché case. The suitcase I will have in the van so as to have as little in the compartment as possible. The train is due to leave here a little after six and is due at Cradock a few minutes after nine a.m. Joe's train is due a few minutes after seven the same morning. He says he will have to return by the fast train on Sunday morning. Ernest Saunders is going down to his sister Florrie's daughter's wedding. He leaves here Friday evening and will return by the fast train on Saturday night so will only be away one working day. I hope to attend the wedding on Saturday afternoon.

Ted brought home a letter on Saturday evening for Grace from Ruth telling of an accident which befell little Anthony on the Monday previous. Their pet dog bit the child just above his eye. He had to be rushed off to the hospital. He was under chloroform for nearly an hour and the Dr had to put in some stitches. It took some time before the dear child came round properly. Denis slept at the hospital that night. The dog has since been disposed of. The Dr says he will always carry the scar. The stitches were to be removed on Sunday. I am very sorry to hear of the accident and hope no damage has been caused to the eye.

Last Sunday morning Mr Howard forgot to call for me for service so I walked on and Grace caught me up. We were about ten to 15 minutes late so sat right at the back of the church. Strange to say I could hear the speaker very much clearer than where we generally sit.

I had an invitation to attend a special meeting of the local Town Council when a new Mayor was elected and installed. I had been told that these functions were accompanied by a good deal of liquor – not that I wanted any – but wanted to see for myself how the function was managed. Some years ago, Mom and I attended a similar function in Bloemfontein which passed off very nicely. Rev Griffiths took me down in his car and I am pleased to say the function was a teetotal one and was well conducted. I congratulated the new Mayor on the occasion.

Did I tell you that Joe took the children to see the Port Elizabeth Show and some of the children got separated from him and it was an anxious time before they were found. Joe is still waiting for the confirmation of his appointment. I hope he will hear soon what the future holds for him. It is nice that we shall have four days together in Cradock. We have not had any news of Lynne since they called here on their way to Natal. I guess they are back in Queenstown by now. Most of the proceedings were in English.

The big double storey house just opposite here has now been renovated. The whole of the balcony has been removed, it was very rotten, and will not be replaced. It is now occupied by lads in the Railway training school.

Monday noon. I am disappointed that there is no post for me this morning. Perhaps it has gone direct to Cradock. You can post to me care of Premier Hotel and I will arrange with the proprietor to redirect anything that may come after I leave. I have been very busy the last week looking through old papers and letters, destroying a great many. It is very hard to do this as there is so much of interest, to me at least, but it has to be done I suppose.

Pam is pleased that she gained 13 lbs in weight during her holiday at Humewood.

Monday afternoon, 3.30. Post has just brought letters from Aunt Eliza with enclosures from Cape Town. Aunt Emmie has not had any more heart attacks since Good Friday. She has settled her business affairs, I hope to her satisfaction. Aunt Eliza is anxious about my trip alone but is glad Joe will be with me a few days. My next letter will be from Cradock. I must see to my packing etc so as to be ready tomorrow. Hope the train will be up to time on Wednesday morning. Mary is still in Dr's hands – goes to him every day. Hope to hear from Douglas and Evelyn in the morning before I leave.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

Premier Hotel, Cradock
Thursday 15th April, 1948

My dear All,

I am rather at a loss to know how I am going to keep you in touch with my journeying but think perhaps the best plan will be to do a little bit of typing each day whilst the happenings are fresh in my memory and then when a sheet is full, send it along.

My last letter was dated Monday. That evening, after ten o'clock, Joe phoned and Grace answered him. He told of the sudden death of Blodwen's brother, Billy, in the Hospital from a heart attack. Joe consequently would not be able to come to Cradock. I wired first thing on Tuesday morning conveying sympathy and suggesting that I should go to Uitenhage from here. No reply came. Joe phoned at eight last night and told me that Billy was buried yesterday afternoon at Uitenhage. Blodwen was too upset to attend and she had suggested to Joe that I should go there instead of Joe coming here. He asked me to ring him tonight at Dr Ruth's which I shall do. He would like to get Blodwen away for a change to some farm as she is very much run down.

Mary came to see me in the morning, her head is wrapped up and she wears a sort of hood. She was on her way to Dr for her daily treatment. She says she is feeling better. The room I occupy is next to the lounge and next to Mrs Rainer's, the room is 6 ft 9 by about 16 ft. I slept fairly well, had sufficient blankets and a hot water bottle. Rev Ludlow called and Mr Galloway is still here. I sit at the same table as Mrs Rainier. She is better than formerly, but still coughs at times. Roderick motored me to Saunders and Aunt Eliza in the afternoon. I walked back quite comfortably and have had a good night. A Mr Palvie, a 7th Day Adventist, recently from Taungs, near Vryburg, is staying here and is hiring a flat from Ernest. He says he knows Douglas and has been on or past Grass Ridge. His brother used often to visit us in Vryburg. It was he who used to recite Trouble in Amen Corner. He died in Rhodesia a year or two ago. My plans for today are Mary is calling here about ten, I am going to a meeting in the church parlour at five this afternoon and am ringing Joe up at eight. I may go and see the Monumental Mason about Mom's grave and headstone. Post is delivered here about 11 a.m. Ruth phoned just before Joe phoned. She had seen the death notice in the Eastern Province Herald of Billy's passing and wondered if Joe was here. She said Doctor had removed nine stitches from baby's forehead and was getting on alright.

Later. Thursday afternoon. Mary came about ten and we went with Mr Botha in his car to the cemetery. Mom's grave is quite tidy. None of the everlasting flowers are there. The big stone gateway has been removed to the top side of the furrow and the roadway will then be made direct to the boundary by the sports ground fence. We looked at several headstones and decided to have a kerb round our two graves in blue granite and Mom's stone the same size, height and shape as Uncle James'. The cost including lettering will be £45. He reckons he will be able to finish it by the end of this month. I suggest the wording as follows: Mary Emma Butler (born Collett) February 2nd 1862, died March 25th 1947. Wife of Charles Butler.

Mr Botha then motored us to Dr Scholtz. Whilst waiting there, May Collett also came for treatment. I saw Dr for a few minutes and he remarked how well I was looking. This is the common remark of everyone. Dr felt my pulse and said it was very good, only missing a beat occasionally. He advised me to keep moving but not to overdo it. He was very pleased to see me. He had bought a farm but is not retiring yet. From there we walked to Moorcrofts and met Aunt Annie (Bertie) and whilst there, Uncle Gervase came over and joined us. They are all well. They are going to the wedding on Saturday. Mrs West is away at Maritzburg for a while. Gervase motored us to White and Boughtons, stopped for a few minutes, met Mrs James of the Building Society and embraced the opportunity – Joyce – in the street and then back to the Premier for dinner. There is no post today from anyone. Gervase will call for me about five to attend a church meeting and at eight I am phoning to Joe. The manageress here says I can stay longer than 2nd if I want to. I think I shall go to Uitenhage perhaps about Monday or Tuesday and come back here about the end of the month and then go to Fish River. Shall be able to decide better after talking to Joe tonight. As this sheet is practically filled, will post it this afternoon.

Lots of love to all,

Charles

Premier Hotel, Cradock
Saturday morning April 17th, 1948

My dear All,

I have a few minutes to spare before going up to town to have my hair cut before the wedding this afternoon. It is a dull morning and I still have my cardigan on. Since I posted last, I have taxied up to Market Street to see Aunt Eliza. Mary called in whilst I was there. She, Mary, is improving in health and is going out to Katkop for a month to get her strength up. Yesterday I had dinner at the Poplars. Ernest and Alison are very comfortable in their new house which is most conveniently arranged and fitted up. In the morning I walked round the block and called for morning tea with Miss Metcalf, her sister Mrs Solomon was also present. They were both very kind and we enjoyed a good old talk. The Booths are away at Humewood so did not see them. I called on Mrs van der Vyver who was very pleased to see me. Her house is beautifully finished and furnished. She showed me all over.

It is now Monday morning, 7.30. A good deal has happened since I started this letter so must go back a bit. After seeing Mrs van der Vyver, Mr was not in, I called to see the Botha's - monumental mason - but the house was locked up. They were very kind to us when we were ill. Then I saw Mrs Crosbie, who was in bed with her baby - three months old. I had a good look at our old home but did not go in or see anyone. The front garden seemed much as I left it. The Jacaranda tree has grown a good deal. Everything looked clean and tidy. From there up Kruger's Lane, I notice that the Council has removed two of the iron railings which were across the lane so now cyclists and cars ride up and down without much hindrance which is a great mistake.

I had a rest before and after lunch and went to the wedding in the church. There was a large gathering there and the decorations on the communion table were more than I have ever seen, very beautiful flowers. Of course the bride and all attendants were lovely. I won't attempt to describe that portion of the function except to remark that there was a grand show. Iris motored me to the Town Hall for the reception. A band was in attendance and the tables all over the room looked very nice. There was some delay having photographs taken at the studio. I enquired how it came about that the bridegroom's Christian name is Butler. His mother informed me that her maiden name was Butler.

Saturday evening the new proprietor of the Midland News, Mr Talbot, spent the evening in the lounge here till about 9.30. He seems a very nice man and I hope he will do well.

Sunday morning I taxied up to see Aunt Charlotte. She was very bright and cheerful and glad I had called. I did not see the Matron, it being Nagmaal, they were at church. I returned by taxi and stopped to see the Crosbies and incidentally had a cup of warm milk before walking to church.

In the afternoon I taxied to see the Webbers for a few minutes and then to Market Street again. Ernest and Alison had kindly asked a few friends in to meet me after supper but owing to it being very cold and a little drizzle was falling and also to the fact that the Salvation Army was holding special services, some of my friends did not come. Mrs Mayhew, Mrs Moys Senior, Mary and some others were there and stayed until about 9.30. Uncle Gervase motored me back to the Premier.

Douglas phoned again at dinner time and said that he and Evelyn would be over about 12 or one and would have lunch with me. I have asked Mary to join us as well. It is raining steadily now, ten a.m., and this may delay Douglas on the road. Rex is taking the old car back to Vryburg direct from Queenstown so I shan't see him. Now that I am here, I am thinking that I might as well go on from Uitenhage on to Cape Town, everyone says how well I am looking but I will talk it over with Douglas when he arrives. This room is booked for someone else after 22nd and they will not have room when I propose returning from Uitenhage, so perhaps I shall either stay longer in Uitenhage or go straight through to Fish River. Gladys Norman said it would be convenient for me to go there any time. Aunt Kate, Grass Ridge, is due back from Johannesburg on Wednesday this week.

Grace writes that Ted is not any better from the injections. His Dr thinks he should go on sick leave for a while but Grace thinks it would be better for him to keep occupied rather than be idle. No post this morning so far.

Later. ¼ to 3. Douglas and Evelyn have just started for home. They will get there on Wednesday. Mary had dinner with us. All well. They have given me a nice lot of photos of the wedding. I have given up the idea of going to Cape Town from Uitenhage. Perhaps Mary will go with me later on. It has been raining all day so far. Farmers will be glad. Must have a little rest now and finish a few things I still have to see to. Hope the weather will be fine in Uitenhage. Hope you all keep well. Am going up to say goodbye to Aunt Eliza. Am sorry not to finish the sheet but will write again from Uitenhage.

Much love to all,
Dad

16 Mills Street, Uitenhage
Friday April 23rd, 1948

My dear All,

It is not as easy as it looks to write letters whilst on a holiday but I am trying to get a letter off today as I have not written one since I arrived on Tuesday afternoon. I had some trouble when leaving Cradock. I knew by the timetable that the train was not booked to stop at Zwartkops Station so I particularly asked the Ticket examiner if this train did stop there and he said it did. I asked twice "can I rely on that" and he said yes. So on the strength of this, I gave Clifford a shilling to send a wire to Joe saying the train would stop. When the examiner came round on the train, he was another man – not the same one I spoke to on the Station, and he said the train would not stop. A Railway officer in the same compartment with whom I had been talking, followed the examiner into the corridor and spoke to him and when he came back, he said it was alright, the train would stop. It didn't. There was Joe waiting for me. At Port Elizabeth Station I did not know if Joe had a car there and would come on and meet me there. However a lad came up to me and asked if I was Mr Butler. I had my dark glasses on and evidently did not recognise him. It was Roy! I am sure I should not have recognised him, he has grown so much. We waited over an hour and caught the train back to Uitenhage, arriving about six.

There has been lots of rain in these parts but there has not been any washaways. I got so far when Blodwen's sister and husband and sister-in-law called to see me. Mr and Mrs Merrifield have been old friends from Observatory days. They all say how well I am looking. They were interested in looking through the photos of Lynne's wedding and the album of our Golden Wedding photographs. So far I have not been into town but we hope to go and see Uncle Owen and family on Saturday afternoon.

Saturday morning. I could not finish this yesterday but want to get it off this morning so that it can go by the fast train this afternoon. I have not had any post the last two days, probably because I have not given any fresh address. After receipt of this, you can post to poste restante, Fish River Station. I shall probably go straight there from here about next Wednesday. It is a beautiful fresh morning. Joe has already gone to work, I have just listened to the seven o'clock news, which is not very cheerful I am sorry to say. It looks as though there is a civil war in Palestine and this may spread to another world war. God forbid.

Last evening Joe and I paid a short visit to a friend of his whom I have met several times at different Synods. We had an interesting talk. I understand that Rev Weavers will be leaving Uitenhage at the end of the year. They came to see me late yesterday afternoon. Mrs Weavers is attending some women's meeting in Cradock next week.

The boys are very interested in watching my typing. Roy says he wants to be a doctor when he grows up. Trevor says he wants to be a farmer and Trevor also wants to be a doctor. Dr Ruth was here yesterday afternoon and took Blodwen's blood pressure. She is certainly getting better, I am glad to say. Merle has just come to see what I am typing. She says she wants to be a nurse.

I am glad to say that I am sleeping very well and have a good appetite. I see I cannot finish this sheet so will close with love to each and all. Hoping to hear from you all soon.

Yours affectionately,
Charles

16 Mills Street, Uitenhage
April 27th, 1948

My dear All,

Sixty one years ago today, I embarked on board the old Drummond Castle at Tilbury Docks, London for South Africa. What a lot of events have been crowded into those years. The business which I came out to help my brother in has ceased to be and the Midland News I helped to start has been sold, so the name of Butler so far as business is concerned in Cradock has ceased to exist. Such is life.

I have decided to alter my departure from Uitenhage until Friday, the reason being that as Uncle Owen's daughter, Beryl, is going up to Eric and Freda by the morning train from Port Elizabeth, Joe thinks it would be nice for both of us to travel together as far as Cradock. I will spend Sunday in Cradock and do what little business I still have to do there on Saturday. Perhaps Clifford will motor me out to Katkop on Monday or I can go by train. Joe does not like the idea of me getting out of the train unaided but I have always found willing helpers wherever I go. I will probably leave Cradock for Kroonstad on Saturday 8th.

My last dear all was far from up to date. It was written under difficulties. I should have mentioned that on the Saturday before last I had a phone message from Douglas from Queenstown and another on Sunday. I also had a call from Grace wanting Douglas to motor me to Uitenhage and another on the same day from Joe. I think it was the same day that I had a postcard from Dot so all the family were in touch with me. It was very nice to realise that we were so close together. Douglas and Evelyn and Rex had come down to bring Lynne's wedding presents and incidentally to see her as well and also for Rex to take back the old car they had had for their honeymoon. Rex returned direct but Douglas and Evelyn came over to see me. I invited Mary to have dinner with us as well so we had a nice time together. They left about 2.30 and slept at Trompsburg and got home on Wednesday evening after having spent some time in Kimberley and attending a political meeting. The roads were very wet they say.

On Saturday afternoon, Joe, Blodwen and I went to see Uncle Owen and Aunt Kate. Whilst there, Olive and Agatha and Arnold Gedye arrived. It was nice to see them all. They have a very nice house and of course the garden is great attraction. Uncle Owen gave us a beautiful bunch of roses and Beryl did as well. The house is rather far from the middle of the town but very nice when you get there. The piece of ground that Joe would like to buy is in that neighbourhood. There is a very nice view from there. As Beryl is going up on Friday, it will be nice to have her company. I am wiring to Clifford to see if he can meet me in the evening. In a few minutes I am to go to dinner at Uncle Owen's so must hurry up and get finished. On Sunday my nose started leaking so I stayed in bed all day and since then I have had breakfast in bed. I am much better this morning. Dr Ruth comes here most days. She has been most kind to Blodwen and very helpful in advice. Her baby boy was here yesterday afternoon. Dr has some very interesting experiences to tell and I should not be surprised if she does not write a book about them some day.

Did I tell you that when Roy met me at Port Elizabeth Station, he came up to me and asked if I was Mr Butler. I should not have recognised him, he has grown so much. All of them have grown too. Dannie is a sturdy little chap. Merle is going to be tall. She is doing well in her music and is getting very useful to her mother.

Later. Have just had dinner and chat with Uncle Owen and all. They are all well and send love. It will be nice having company on the journey. I shall see as much as possible of Aunt Eliza. I hope the weather will be fine. There are a lot of people I would like to see in Cradock.

Goodbye for the present. One letter from Reg today. All well.

Charles

29 Market Street, Cradock
Sunday May 2nd, 1948

My dear All,

I am sitting in front of the window in the front room. It is a beautiful bright morning. The sun was shining in the room about quarter to seven. I have just finished breakfast, consisting of porridge, a boiled egg, fresh dates, bread and butter and a cup of milk. I feel literally "fed up" and I am sure I can carry on without any further refreshments until dinner time.

Yesterday last year was May 3rd, the date of the sale of 34 Dundas Street and the breaking up of the home. What a lot has happened since. Still I have very much to be thankful for. I hope there will not be any such upheavals during the next twelve months.

I have not a copy of my last dear all from Uitenhage so cannot refer to what was recorded in same, so excuse me if I repeat myself. Joe, Blodwen and I had a very pleasant afternoon at Harper Street on Saturday afternoon and the following Tuesday I had dinner with them. Their house seems very comfortable, some steps leading from the kitchen would be a trouble to me. One afternoon, Joe took me by taxi to see some neighbouring properties near there and where he would like to build. It is a much nicer part of the town than where they are living at present but much further from his work. There is a bus service not too far away. Blodwen does not care for the idea as it would be very awkward for shopping and further for the children to go to school. However he has not yet had official confirmation of his appointment. I do not suppose anything will happen before that is made. I am glad to say Joe is looking much better since he is not working at the forge. I am glad I went to Uitenhage. Blodwen was certainly better when I left on Friday. The children keep well but Merle is very thin. She hardly eats anything but is quite active and is getting on nicely with her studies and her music. She is 13 now and looks as though she is going to be tall.

The journey up was slow in comparison with the train I went down by. Stopping at all stations and sometimes in between stations was tedious. Beryl was on the same train but in another compartment but for all that, she spent most of the time with me and needless to say I enjoyed her company. I did not leave the saloon all the way. Uncle Gervase and Clifford were at the station to see us and Clifford motored me here. Aunt Eliza and Maude Miller were expecting the train to arrive about ten instead of nine. I was soon in bed and slept right through to 6.30 – something quite unusual for me. Saturday Clifford motored his sister, Mrs Hall and others to Grahamstown to see the capping ceremony of many of the students at the University. I paid a number of calls during the morning and motored back, and in the afternoon I went to see the Wests who were pleased to see how well I was looking. Mrs West has lost her mother and sister recently. Mr Lidbetter had called to see me whilst I was out. I will take a taxi and see him and Mr Stock at the same time. There was no post here for me so I phoned to Katkop in the evening and there was nothing there so perhaps I shall find some when I get to Grass Ridge. Norman says someone will be coming in on Tuesday for the Stock Fair and I am to go out with them. Mary is at Mrs Wesley Collett's at the present but I hope to see her on Thursday at the Fete. Aunt Eliza is kindly supplying me with meals – breakfast and supper – and Maude Miller sends in my dinner which is very convenient.

The Monumental Mason is taking me tomorrow afternoon to see the headstone for Mom's grave. I am leaving room on the same stone for my name and date and the name of the town where I may pass out if I should die away from Cradock. Sentimentally one would naturally prefer to be buried side by side of those you love.

Since the above was typed, I have been to service, Clifford came for me in his car. He tells me that on his return trip from Grahamstown yesterday, one of the wheels of his car came off. No serious damage was done and no one was hurt. Whilst they were away, his Mother had a bad turn, very much like what his Dad had some years ago. I hope to see her before I leave on Tuesday afternoon.

I am glad to say that Aunt Eliza seems to be as well as usual. Whilst I am here, the servant is not sleeping in but will resume her duties when I leave on Tuesday. I notice a few flowers are growing in the yard and all the pigeons have been got rid of. When Mary returns from the country I understand she wants to get a room somewhere near 29 where she can have the use of her own furniture which has been store ever since I left Cradock last year.

I am taking my cushion from the church with me to Kroonstad. It will be more comfortable for me there. I notice that my name is still on the pew Mom and I occupied for years.

I will post this on my way to or from church this evening. I hope there will be some post tomorrow, I do not seem to have received many letters since I left Kroonstad. I hope everyone is well and flourishing,

Much love to all,
Dad

Grass Ridge, Fish River
Monday May 10th, 1948

My dear All,

If all goes according to plan, by this time next week I shall be back in Kroonstad. So far I have had a very enjoyable time, have seen many friends and relations and have been welcomed everywhere. It has been difficult to write a consecutive account of all the doings in chronological order but that does not matter so long as I get the main facts recorded.

I came out by lorry on Tuesday afternoon with Neville and Godfrey after the Stock Fair was over. They had to call at Bladens to see about some trucking of stock so we had tea there and were off to Katkop about sundown. We stopped a moment or two at Saltpansdrift and saw Nancy and her baby, both very well. Baby is about five months old and is doing well. Great improvements are in progress on the house. All the veranda has been taken down and a granolithic stoep laid all round. A dwarf wall is most likely to be erected and pillars erected to carry the veranda iron which will be replaced and re-erected better than it was before. The new fireplace in the lounge, where the piano stood for years, is a nice piece of work in stone, on similar lines to the one at Uncle Norman's. The fireplace in the dining room had been entirely removed. The bedroom opposite the front door has been divided into two rooms, one an office for Neville and the other half into a bathroom. A door is to be made in the one passage so as to obviate having to go onto the stoep to get to what used to be called the prophet's room, used mostly for the Minister when he pays his monthly visit. Mom and I often occupied the room. A good deal of work has still to be done. I did not have time to go into the garden or lands but all the prickly pears that Uncle Herbert had planted and enclosed in the avenue of trees leading from the main road to the house have been killed by the cacto-blasta and cochineal insects. They are talking of making the road to the house down the avenue. Some of the old houses used by the servants are being demolished, they should have been so treated – according to my ideas – about sixty years ago. I stayed at Katkop until Thursday morning when we came to the Fete, the 33rd in its history. The day was perfect, no wind and consequently no dust, a big crowd of helpers and a bigger crowd of visitors than ever before. Over 220 sat down to the famous lunch for which only a charge of 2/6 was made. I do not think a similar lunch would be served at any hotel for less than 4/- or 5/-. Of course everything was served cold. The lunch brought in over £30. Only a few springboks were on sale, I wanted to buy five, one for Cape Town and for each home but all the farmers said that as the weather was so warm, the meat would not keep and the day being a holiday, could not be dispatched. I hope you will take the will for the deed. Perhaps next year, if I am spared, and Ascension Day comes a bit later when the weather is cooler, I may be able to carry out my desire in this direction.

A men's tennis tournament drew about 25 competitors and some very fine games were played. They kept going all day. The takings for church funds amounted to £270. Not a record but a very satisfactory effort. 65 cars were counted besides a number of lorries, carts etc. Aunt Agnes spent most the morning watching the tennis and had lunch early and then went home. Of course Uncle Jack was there and he took me to see the new vestry he had built and given to the church. It is on the small side but is a useful addition. After dinner I slipped away and had a nap at Gladys Collen's house. Harry Collett was not present but his son, John, was amongst the tennis players. He informed me that his dad had gone to Pietersburg with two sons who are working on some mine near the town. He had gone up by the train that morning. I wonder if Reg and Dot could get in touch with him. I am sure he would be pleased to meet them. His address is 48 Groebler Street, Pietersburg. John also told me that his mother had recently been attacked by a cat that had gone wild. It had scratched her badly and also bitten her on her leg very deeply. This had turned septic and had caused a great deal of pain and necessitated her being in bed.

On Sunday evening after service I was surprised to see Florrie and Alice Biggs outside the church. They had come over on a round of visits to the relations and also attended the Fete. They had not been here for several years. Mary was of course here with them and is expected here some time today. I do not know if she is going back to Cradock with me on Saturday. I got a nice lot of post at the Fete. Grace reported that Charles had come home from the farm where he had been staying owing to all the schools having been closed on account of the outbreak of infantile

paralyses. He was suffering from tonsillitis and Dr had to be called in. Some lozenges he has prescribed appear to have worked wonders, so much so that the lad was up in a day or so. Both Pam and Jean have had colds since I left. Schools have reopened since as there have not been any fresh cases of paralysis.

I must not attempt another sheet as I understand we are going to Groenkloof this afternoon to fetch Mary. We visited the dam yesterday. There is still about seven feet space for more water before the dam is full.

Mrs Willie Saunders has been very ill for about a week but the last account was that she was getting better. The Wests have kindly asked me to spend Saturday evening with them and are asking some of my friends to meet at their house to meet me. Very kind of them. My train leaves at eleven p.m. Must stop now. Lots of love to all.

Charles

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Saturday May 22nd, 1948

My dear All,

It is just a week ago that I left Cradock on my return here and so far I have not written a dear all. I did send a postcard to each home shortly after my arrival last Sunday but that was only a makeshift for a proper letter. There was a good deal of post awaiting me and a number of newspapers to read. I have at last practically got my desk clear of letters and can therefore give this morning to you all. It was a year ago on Wednesday, 19th, that I left for Potgietersrus and this year I have marked the occasion by having my breakfast in bed and the electric heater on in my room. Do not please think that I am ill and need this attention but Grace, who has looked after me so well, thinks it is a wise precaution as we are now getting colder weather. As a matter of fact, I feel better than I have done for a very long time. The change has certainly done my health much good, for which I am very thankful. I find that I can walk better and am feeling stronger.

I had a very comfortable journey back, a young married man shared the compartment and I enjoyed talks with him on various subjects, religious and otherwise. He belongs to the Anglican Church and has been greatly helped by fellowship with the Christian Science movement. He was on his way to Johannesburg to a new situation in the boot manufacturing business. My bed had been made up before the train arrived at Cradock. I had requested the System Manager to arrange this for me.

I don't know if I can recount all the doings since my last letter, but I had a very nice time at Grass Ridge after the Fete. Mary spent a few days with me and amongst other places we visited were the cemetery and the river. We noticed that the headstone over grandpa and grandma's grave is slightly leaning over. Kate wants Dudley to have the grounds tidied up.

One day, as we were motoring to the station, we found a native boy sleeping on the farm road. We thought at first he was dead. It was some time before we could rouse him. His bicycle was alongside of him. He had apparently been mending the machine and got tired. However he was not there when we returned. Kate and Mary did a good deal of gardening. I looked on. They have such a pretty little Chrysanthemum, just like a little pearl or daisy. Kate has promised to send Grace some roots when the proper time for planting arrives. Jack showed me the new vestry he had had built – and paid for – at the church. It is small and only opens from the church. Another time we went to see the dam. It was about seven feet from the top. The spillway has been raised three feet so as to hold more water. It is a fine sight. Water was liberated whilst we were there. The veldt was looking better than it has done for years. The Karoo bushes are increasing wonderfully. Of course I had a look at the old wagon house where we were married 55 years ago. The cattle are looking in good condition. Dudley shot a springbok at 30 yards on the way back from the station one day.

It would be difficult to name all the relations and friends that I met. Amongst the number were Aunt Agnes and of course Enid and Gladys, Neville and Nancy and the baby, Florrie and Alice, old Mrs Theo Trollip and crowds more. All remarked how well I was looking, it almost became embarrassing.

Last Saturday I had dinner at the Poplars and after that a rest at Aunt Eliza. She had already begun her nap but managed to rouse her. She had prepared dinner for me – evidently had not received Mary's letter saying I was going to Ernest's. I had promised the Wests to have supper with them and they had invited some of the old friends to meet me. Being Saturday evening, only a few turned up. Dulcie and Fenner, Joy and May did not stop long, Florrie Hall and May (Clifford was not in town) and Uncle Gervase. The latter motored me to the station about 10.30. Old Mr Sowden is back here and spent Wednesday afternoon with me in my room. He is two years older than me and is very active. We are going for a walk together soon as far as the river.

I have brought up the cushion from our pew in the church. The seats are very hard here. The photographs of Lynne's wedding which Evelyn gave me when they came over from Queenstown have been very much admired by all. I had them with me on my tour.

The new help for Aunt Eliza was expected "on trial" shortly after I left. I hope she will be a real help. Maude Millar was sleeping at 29 after I left until the new help arrived. All the pigeons

have gone from 29. I think I told you on my postcard that Emily's baby, Leslie, had been unwell and Dr had been out. The last report was that she was better and was christened on the farm at their last service. I have not heard any recent news as to how Denis' baby is getting on. The last news was to the effect that nine stitches had been removed.

Monday is a public holiday also the following Monday so I do not know when you will get this but I want to get it off this afternoon so will close with love to all and hoping to get more letters than I have been receiving lately.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad

5th June, 1948

My dear All,

I think that it must be about a fortnight since I sent my last dear all and even now I am not able to do it myself, but it being Saturday afternoon, and Pam has the afternoon off, she has another appointment at 4 so I must get a move on. I think I was able to send a postcard to each of you about a week ago, and Grace has been keeping you more or less informed as to what has been my position. I can't definitely explain what has happened, but my blind eye went wrong somehow, and I had the feeling for some days that it was likely to burst. A little previously I felt as though an eyelash was worrying the eye, but neither Grace nor anyone else could see it. Then Grace thought perhaps it was a sty forming but Dr disillusioned us on that point. This has been going on for practically the whole week. Dr has prescribed medicines, bicarbonate of soda and medicines, with the result that the pain has certainly decreased but I have not been able to do any typing and very little reading. The Dr at one stage thought that the eye would have to be removed but I feel sure that I could not stand that and I hope that the major trouble has passed and that I will be able to get back to normal.

Dorothy phoned from Potgietersrus, saying that they might be going down to Johannesburg to Trixie for the long weekend, and Douglas also phoned from the farm as soon as he got news of what was going on. A member of the postal staff at Vryburg and his wife were here on a visit by car, and took a note back which they phoned to Douglas on their arrival that same evening. We are expecting him to phone again tonight. He may be going over to Kimberley next week and I shan't be surprised if he does not come on here.

Joe wrote on the 26th but as he addressed the letter to 47 Reitz Street, Cradock, it was held up for a few days. We are very glad to hear that he has got the confirmation of his appointment, which dates back to November last year. In addition to the increase in pay, he is entitled to 35 days holiday, and these can accumulate up to 6 months before he goes on pension. He gave them a surprise last week when he came home from work in a Chev. lorry, second hand, which cost him £110. He is looking forward to using this for a Christmas holiday at the coast. A letter from Ruth this morning says that Dennis and Dee had spent a day at Port Alfred. Both babies are well. Tony's scar is noticeable but they seem to be both doing very well. I have had some postcards from Aunt Emmie and one letter from Aunt Eliza since I left Cradock but does not mention the new arrangements which I hope have been made for her comfort.

We have had a letter from Lynne and I am sending the wedding photographs on for Ruth to see. I have not been dressed for a week, but everybody has been very kind and attentive, I have my news every day, a heater and hot water bottle. Have not been allowed many visitors, for the most part of the time have been lying with both my eyes closed, resting all I can. Of course, my correspondence and reading is getting behind hand but that can't be helped. Rev Mr Griffiths has been to see me every day but I hope to be able to get back to normal at the beginning of the week. Ernest Saunders and his wife were here yesterday. Sorry to hear that his mother has had more serious heart attacks recently. His mother-in-law has just gone down to Cradock to stay with them for a little while. I understand Mary is staying at the Poplars a present.

Thanks for all your envelopes, Granddad is very tired, but gosh he dictates! 50 miles an hour is slow compared to it. So please excuse all mistakes. The two lines skipped were due to a tear in the paper.

Lots of love to you all. Granddad does appreciate all your letters.

Love to all,

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Friday evening June 11th, 1948

My dear All,

It is just a fortnight since Dad's eye trouble started, and I am sorry to say it is not over yet. Our local Doctor has been very attentive and sympathetic. He said from the start that frequently Specialists operated and removed the eye, simply to get rid of the frightful pain which the patient had to endure, and if there had been any question of saving the sight of the eye, he would have recommended something of the sort at once; but as it was a blind eye, he thought it wiser to try and cure it with medicine; of course Dad's age is against an operation. Well we have persevered with all he has given us, the last effort being Penicillin, and nothing has helped appreciably. He now suggests that we should take Dad to a Specialist in Johannesburg, next week. He will make all the necessary arrangements by phone tomorrow, and when we hear the result of his phoning, I will wire.

Just after the Dr had been, Dot came through on the phone and when she heard what was proposed, she said she and Reg would meet us in Johannesburg. Douglas has to be in Kimberley next week on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, so at the moment I cannot say what he will be able to do. I am waiting now for a phone call to go through to him, but I anticipate a bit of a delay as it is Friday which is their day for town, and as Rex announced his engagement to Vivienne Rowe yesterday, perhaps there will be some celebration on the go today. Dad wired Rex yesterday for his birthday and again today to congratulate him.

I am afraid all this trouble has upset Dad a good bit, but he is being very brave. I have given him one of the tablets to ease the pain and no doubt soon he will be asleep. So I think I will break off at this stage and finish off tomorrow when there is more definite news to report.

Saturday morning. After a pretty bad night, Dad was not too cheerful this morning but I had two conversations with Dot and Douglas and we agreed that it would be best to see a Dr in Johannesburg, after considering Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth. Dot will come down alone to Johannesburg, by train, and we will have to make use of buses and trams for getting about. Douglas cannot be there until Wednesday or Thursday. I was at the surgery this morning when the Dr phoned through to his colleague in Johannesburg and he arranged that the ambulance would meet the train on which we travel and take Dad to Hospital, where Dr Meyer will see him on Tuesday. I am sorry I cannot tell you which hospital or nursing home; that we will find out when we get there. The Dr's address is 63 Lister Buildings, Jeppe Street, but I will send you a further address if Dad has to stay for an operation. Ted will go up with us, but I don't think it should be necessary for him to stay long. In fact I hope we will all be back quite soon. On the way back from the surgery, I sent wires to Douglas, Dot and Joe and to Bree Street, Cradock.

I think that is about all I have time for today. It is going to be a rush to arrange things but I don't want to delay any longer. I believe Hotel accommodation in Johannesburg is a big problem so I cannot say where we will land up. Trixie, Reg's sister, may be able to put Dot up.

Dad sends lots of love and we know you will be thinking of us and that we will be guided to do the right thing.

Yours,
Dad/Grace

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
June 21st, 1948

My dear All,

Here I am again, in the same room, same everything, with a heart full of thankfulness for being able to resume in a lesser degree my former occupations and interests. Pam is at the typewriter as I am sure I have not sufficient physical strength at present to do what she is doing. For 2 or 3 weeks, I have suffered excruciating pain, owing to my blind eye having set up some unaccountable irritation or inflammation, which almost caused brain distraction. Our local Dr did what he could to relieve the irritation, without much success, and eventually considered it best to get expert advice at Johannesburg. Accordingly, we left Kroonstad on Monday 14th, Rev Griffiths very kindly offered to take us in his car. The we included Grace and Ted and myself. We arrived about four hours later, without any accident or serious inconvenience. We interviewed the specialist at the Nursing Home the next day and he said that there was no alternative but to extract the offending eye. We had got in touch with Dot, who had been offered a lift by car to Johannesburg, leaving baby Joanie with Reg to look after. We had also been in touch with Douglas, who had arranged to be in Johannesburg on Wednesday, as I did not feel justified in having the operation without his opinion. The ward at the nursing home contained 7 gents, and was conveniently arranged. The building originally was the residence of some very wealthy people and had been added to and made to accommodate 62 patients. 2 of the patients in my ward suffered from terrible coughs and sleep during the day or night was often greatly disturbed. On one morning 4 patients were discharged and within a few minutes, 3 surgical cases on stretchers were admitted. The feeding and attendance was as to be expected at such an institution and I found the staff very attentive.

We decided for the operation to be performed on Thursday morning, by half past 8 I was back in my bed. I won't go into details as to what happened but I was conscious of about 10 pricks with the needle and some cutting but I was able to brave all these with all the patience at my command. Douglas and Grace and Ted awaited my return to the ward and I was glad that the authorities allowed them a good deal of extra time to be with me than was usual. The visiting hours were from 3 to 5 in the afternoon and about 1 hour extra in the evening. Grace very kindly kept you as fully informed as possible by card and telegrams so it is not necessary to go into detail as to what transpired. They saw a good deal of Johannesburg during the off period, and Trixie Hudson, now Tyson, came to see me as well. I had just missed seeing Len Ambler who had flown over from South West Africa on official business. His son, about 6 ft tall, and his fiancé came to see me a couple of times., they are to be married fairly shortly.

The world is small, one of the patients next to me had married into the family of Crews, who occupied the premises where Rayner Cawood had their store many years afterwards. They had had a big fire in the shop just prior to my arriving in Cradock in 1887. One of his sisters (or relation) was matron at Louis Botha Hostel in my time and I learnt from conversation that she had since passed away.

I must mention that Douglas and Grace and Dot went from the Hotel to the Station, about 5 minutes walk. Dot, who had been knitting a new cardigan for me, had it stolen from her bag with all the material, needles etc. She has now started another to take its place. There was a good deal of shopping to do in one way or another and they had time to see places of interest in and around Johannesburg, including a trip to Pretoria. Ted returned by train on Thursday the 17th and found all well at home. Ted was fortunate in making arrangements for a Mr Biggs to come and bring us home. He had previously offered to take us to Johannesburg. He has a nice new car and he and his wife wanted to visit some of their friends near Johannesburg. Ted stayed at the Hotel with Grace. Dot and Grace shared one room and Douglas and Ted another while in the Hotel. Mr Biggs is some distant relation of the Graff Reinets Biggs's and is employed by the South African Railways here as signal instructor. Of course we paid the cost of petrol of both journeys which was a great consideration. Punctually at 10 o'clock on Sunday morning, we were all ready to start home. Douglas and Trixie and Husband and the 2 children were there to see us off and we had a very comfortable journey back, making 2 stops on the way for refreshments and arriving here at about

half past one. On the upward journey, I don't think I opened my eyes and consequently saw very little of the country through which we passed. But on the return trip, I was able to see practically everything except during the time I had a nap. Of course my head was properly bandaged up so that no harm could come to the eye. It is a wonderful country which we passed through, wonderful in many ways. The distance between the two towns is approximately 140 miles and I could not help recalling the words of the spies who went to spy out the Promised Land when they reported "There is much land to be possessed." For miles and miles and miles you travel over undulating land, clusters of trees dotted about here and there, all wire fencing where any property occurs. No hedges as in dear old England, of course. The Vaal River is a fine sight and the Barrage impounds a huge quantity of water which is conveyed in a huge slood to farms in Bechuanaland. There is no striking difference in the nature of the country around Johannesburg to give any indication of the immensity of gold that has been extracted from the mines there. The same sort of formation and soil can be found in various parts of the Union. Here within 20 miles of Kroonstad, gold deposits have within the last 2 or 3 years been opened which it is thought will even eclipse Johannesburg mines. At Parys is a pretty little village between the Vaal and here. We stopped for lunch and the Municipality have laid out holiday resorts which are patronised very largely by people from Johannesburg and elsewhere. I am thinking it might be suitable for Joe and family if they do not go to Keurboomrivier near Knysna.

I must not forget to thank you all for our kindness in writing so often and telegraphing enquiries. Am sorry to hear that Aunt Eliza's domestic arrangements will have to be revised. It is unfortunate that no member of the family is available to render the necessary assistance, but I hope as I have often done before, that "way will open". Aunt Emmie seems to keep about the same, and looks forward to a possible visit from me in the future, but both of us have arrived at the age when it is encumbered to live and plan only for a day at a time. Of course most of the time during my illness correspondence has been read to me by Grace, who has been invaluable in keeping you all informed of my condition. I am very sorry to have given so much anxiety to each and all, but am thankful that I have come out of the trying time as well as I have. I don't know if I will be able to continue Dear Alls – "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."

On the 27th will be the 61st anniversary of my arrival in Cradock. I would like, if I can manage it, and with Pam's help, to write a separate letter which might be of interest to residents in Cradock. I have not mentioned that to the new proprietor of the Midland News but I feel sure it would be very interesting to readers of the Midland. Here I must stop except to add that Dr has been to see me, and he is very pleased and satisfied with the operation. The question of procuring a glass eye is being considered but I lean rather to just having a shield than going to any extra expense. I do not know yet what the expense will mount up to but I expect it will make a considerable hole in £100 which I am thankful to be able to meet. Supper is now over and I must get to bed. Grace is reading what Pam has already typed and no doubt will have other particulars to add which I have overlooked. I am very thankful to be back again and no doubt a number of friends will be calling during the week.

(new typist, excuse errors). I am afraid Dad's dictation was rather disjointed and I hope you will be able to follow what he intended to convey. He stood the journey home very well and has been dressed for part of the day. He finds he is weak on his legs, but I think he will recover his strength in due course. It was very cold this morning, taps were frozen etc, so he did not get dressed until mid-day. Mrs Florence arrived from Wellington about mid-day with two of Jim's children, for holidays, and she came down to see Dad before going out with Mr Thompson to their farm. Jim's eldest, a boy of 14, looks just like him. We hope to see more of them. Mrs Florence looks very well. Was interested to hear of Arthur having a son, Lesley Miles. Charles claims now that Neville Thompson is his cousin! When our Doctor came to see Dad this afternoon, he congratulated us on the neat "dressing" we had on his head. I pass round his head twice, and we put the surgical dressing on first, then tie this flap over and it is not too bulky for his spectacles. He has done quite a lot of reading today.

Now I think that is about all there is room for. Much love from all at Kroonstad, and thanks for kind letters of sympathy.

Tuesday morning. Charles writing. I have got dressed by myself this morning and want to get this off today but I am quite out of practice and consequently very slow. Let me correct a mistake. Grace was not with Dot when she lost her knitting, only Douglas.

Today is Charles 9th birthday and the shortest day. I went to boarding school when I was nine. Of course my bad eye has to be kept bandaged day and night for some time. There are drops to be put in each daily.

Nice lot of letters today including one from Eliza, Emmie, Mary and Joe. It will take me some time to answer them but I will do so as quickly as possible. Ted sleeps in my room and is a great help in many ways.

Much love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday June 29th, 1948

My dear All,

I feel it is my duty to attempt another epistle as it is about a week since my last. As a matter of fact, I did very little to the letter so far as the actual typing was concerned. Some of my readers were quick to notice the great improvement in actual work. Then of course in my young days there were no such machines as typewriters or typists. The present generation has many advantages over the old.

I am glad to be able to report that I am making progress. Last night gave me the best sleep I have had since returning from the Nursing Home. May the standard keep up. I find the nights are very long and often lie awake for hours with my mind wandering all over the world and beyond.

I have been trying to concentrate my energies during the week in answering as many of the kind letters received during my hours of suffering and pain during recent weeks. I posted half a dozen yesterday and have two more ready for this afternoon's post. I continue to receive quite a number of letters enquiring as to my state of health. Yesterday Uncle Jack wired from Fish River.

Yesterday we had news from Joe that at last he has bought a house in Luyt Street (No. 23) a few streets nearer to town and about the same distance from his work I should think. He had notice to get out of his present home and won't be sorry to do so. The Owner wants it for himself by the end of the year. The new home has three bedrooms, water etc laid down and I hope they will be very happy there. The price was £2000. Dr Ruth put them on the track of the house. It certainly will be a nicer neighbourhood.

Schools here break up tomorrow. So far as I know, none of the family is going away. Ted returns to duty on 1st after his month's holiday. He has not been away anywhere except to Johannesburg with Grace and me.

I am wondering if buying the house in Uitenhage will mean the altering of Joe's Xmas holidays near Knysna. He will find the motor lorry that he recently purchased will be sure to come in useful for such a trip. No plans have been made for this household for Xmas holidays. Reg and Dot, I believe, still have made some reservations from their last holiday at Port Alfred but as he is now on the full time job as Secretary to the Hospital at Potgietersrus, he may not be able to get away as easily as last year. Fancy six months of 1948 practically behind us.

I am sorry to hear that Aunt Emmie had to spend some days in bed recently on account of her heart trouble. Aunt Eliza I understand may be making some change in her domestic arrangements. Mary is spending the school holidays with her Mother at Graaff Reinet. Aunt Letty wrote such a nice letter to Grace congratulating her on her work in connection with my operation etc.

Yesterday we had a call from a Mrs Forbes who lives near Schweizer-Reneke and was at school with Aunt Kate Dudley. She is connected with the Frylinks of Vryburg. She knows Mrs van der Spuy when they farmed at Lilyfontein. A very nice old lady.

Mrs van der Spuy suggests that I should write and publish some of my recollections. Some job! She has also asked for another copy of my last Xmas card which I have sent.

I have offered the Midland News a series of articles on Cradock 61 years ago but have not had time to receive a reply.

Some visitors are expected this afternoon belonging to the Church so I must not write much more. I hope to see Canon Gould one of these days. He has been to see me twice since I have been here.

Dr was here yesterday and is very pleased with the condition of my eye. As he has sent his account, I don't suppose he will call again except in his private capacity. He tells me he is writing a temperance article which I expect he will want me to see.

We have not heard from Douglas and Evelyn lately but we hope to see them when they go over to Bryan Ambler's wedding next month.

I have had letters from Lynne, Emily and Rex lately, to all of whom I hope to write very shortly.

Lots of love to each and all, Charles

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
July 5th, 1948

My Dear All,

David has very kindly offered to do some typing for me. Since last Thursday I have been laid up again with a running nose, coughing etc. I evidently caught cold; I noticed that the barber shop was very draughty. The weather too is rather treacherous, my room in the morning is on the cool side but is delightfully warm in the sunshine, hence one is inclined to get overheated and going back to a cold room. There has been very little temperature and so far no complications. I hope to be back to normal very shortly. I still have very many letters that I have to answer and hope that you will be patient. I think Grace sent you each a postcard on Saturday and I hope to hear good news from all of you in due course. I don't think that we heard from Vryburg all last week.

To complicate matters, Grace's house-girl who lives in and has been with her for some months, cleared out during Wednesday night (end of month) and has not been heard of since. This morning, Monday, the wash-girl has not appeared. This seems to be the way that servants manage in this part of the country, and is most annoying. Fortunately David, Jean and Charles are home on holiday. That extra help is necessary. I am very sorry to be the cause of extra work.

David took service in the Presbyterian Church last night, their resident minister being in the country. A very friendly spirit exists between the ministers of the various denominations.

Last week we had a friendly call from Mrs Florence, great-aunt to Neville Thompson, the little boy who is boarding here. She's still very interested in the family. She was very interested in the photographs of Lynne's wedding. Her son, Jim, is now Principal of the Training College at Wellington. Una and her husband are still living at East London and will shortly be moving to a new house they have purchased.

The young people spent Saturday afternoon playing tennis at Howard's and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Ted resumed his duties after a month's leave on July 1st. It is no joke being at the office at six a.m. these cold mornings. Fortunately they have frequent changes of shift; tomorrow he may not get to the office until two o'clock. It is a pity that he could not get away for part of the time for a change.

Dot writes brightly from Potgietersrus. Her children are enjoying their holiday. We have not heard any definite plans about Christmas from any of the family.

Mr Tom Pierce came yesterday afternoon and took Ted, Grace, Jean and David to tea at his farm. I was going but of course I am not allowed out at present.

Later. A letter came today from Douglas. He is leaving for Bloemfontein today. I am hoping to get into touch with him. The alterations are going on at Mayong. Rex is hoping to get married in September.

I see in the Sunday Times of yesterday that Jim Butler is advocating flooding thousands of morgen of the Kalahari from the Orange River. The precise figures are these: 2,000.000 morgen are to be brought under irrigation. The cost will be £2,000,000.

Four o'clock. Still Sniffing.

Love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
July 12th, 1948

My dear All,

It is a week since David typed a letter for Dad and Dad is anxious that another epistle should go forth, so this is Grace typing with two fingers. I must try to recollect what has taken place during the week. Dad went down with flu on Friday 2nd, the same day that my house-girl disappeared. I had the Dr in during the afternoon and we have seen a lot of him during the week. On Wednesday, Dad was coughing so badly that I had to call the Dr who had not been that day. He gave him an injection of penicillin, which relieved him a lot and he had a comparatively good night. Thursday he repeated the dose, but not on Friday as he thought he was clear. Saturday evening he came again and was quite pleased with Dad's condition, and said he was not to lie in bed unnecessarily, but could get up and sit about in his room and get busy with his work etc. Of course, being Sunday, Dad did not try but got dressed and sat and read etc but all the time coughing. It was a most unpleasant day, windy and dusty. David and Jean went with friends into the District, as David had two preaching appointments, so the rest of us had a quiet day, in fact I did not get dressed until about 5 pm and only then made my bed. We tried all the usual favourite remedies for the coughing such as Nux Vomica, soda-bicarb, Chamberlains and Magnesia, Liquid paraffin and Scott's Emulsion and yet the cough continues. There is practically no phlegm but of course the irritation and straining is exhausting. His temperature this afternoon is 99.

Douglas has been in Bloemfontein during the week and phoned us twice. He had a wretched cold. He got in touch with Harold, who saw him for a couple of hours one evening. He left Bloemfontein on Thursday evening and was to meet Evelyn in Vryburg on Friday. Evelyn and Irene Short have been nursing Mrs van der Spuy for a few days. Kingsley and Cecily are home for the holidays. Mrs Hudson Senior is on a visit to Dot and Reg, with her youngest son, George, in a brand new car and all the trimmings.

The latest news from Grahamstown is that Denis has secured the house next door to Ruth, at a very reasonable rental, so will either sell or let their house for the meantime. They are trying to get a house at Port Alfred for the summer holidays. Joe's news is that they hope to move into their house at the end of this month; and also that the unpleasant landlord is very upset to have received a month's notice of their intention to leave his house.

Mrs Legg is visiting Vryburg and hopes to spend a few days at Grass Ridge and Uplands. She says she is rather tired of travelling around place to place and thinks she had better settle down with one of her children now. Numerous letters have come for Dad, and he is very distressed that he has not the strength to get busy and answer them. I have secured a girl again but find I have to spend most of every morning in the kitchen as she cannot get round to do the cooking. Then, too, Ted has to have an early dinner which makes the mornings shorter than ever. David has been helping Ted to put a ceiling into the new lavatory besides doing a good bit of reading. Jean has certain holiday tasks to do and has played tennis once or twice. A tournament for the juniors is being arranged again this week. David will be returning to Grahamstown on Sunday evening, 25th, and presume Norman will be on the same train. They arrive in Grahamstown on Monday afternoon.

5 p.m. Doctor has just been. Says Dad has not improved since he was here on Saturday night so he has given him another penicillin injection, more mixture, and will be round in the morning, hoping to find an improvement. It is very disappointing to have to keep on calling him back but I suppose Dad's age is against a speedy recovery. I do hope the distracting cough will ease off soon.

With much love, yours,
Grace

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
July 16th, 1948

My dear All,

Grace has set the paper right for me so I must try to get another letter off as soon as possible. We had phone calls from Douglas and Dot earlier in the week. Douglas' cold was decidedly better. David and Norman will be on the train from here on Sunday evening, due at Grahamstown Monday afternoon if anyone wants to see them as they pass Cradock on Monday at 9.30 a.m. We shall miss David a lot. He has been helping his Dad doing a lot of jobs about the house. One of the latest jobs has been to alter the pantry door instead of opening into the narrow room, it now slides on runners against the wall. He is very keen on taking snaps. Both he and Harold have good cameras and turn out some excellent work. Harold sent a snap recently of a very pretty girl and on the back he writes "this is what I went to Bloemfontein for ". No name was attached.

Yesterday morning Dr called about 9.30, early for him, and found me typing and he was very pleased to see it. He encourages me to work. I have at last almost finished looking through the correspondence which has accumulated. Two large envelopes have gone to Dot who I hope will pass them round to Douglas, Joe and others. There are some special ones I must still deal with but my powers for working are limited. The spirit is willing enough and anxious to get on with it but there is a limit to the physical force to do it. Dr seemed pleased with the condition of my lungs, they had almost dried up, he said. He has given me four or five penicillin injections but I still cough much more than I care for. Some nights it is very distressing. Ted still sleeps in my room and Grace often comes in as well. Talking of doctors, I notice Dr always warms his stethoscope with a match before he sounds me. I have had practically no temperature all the time I have been laid up.

I must also report that Dot has sent me another cardigan to replace the one that was stolen from her bag in Johannesburg. Grace is busy sewing it together. Grace has also made me a pair of mittens so that when I am in bed with my arms out, I shan't get cold. The right hand mitten is the novelty. The thumb and first finger, with which I do most of my writing, are only knitted part of the way up the finger whilst the remaining three are knitted further up, in fact the little finger is completely covered owing to the fact that the little finger is always resting on the cold paper. The left hand fingers are all knitted a uniform length. Quite a brainwave.

Yesterday was the first time for quite a while that I was able to have dinner with the family in the dining room. There has been no ill effects. Last evening some of the Sunday School teachers and scholars dropped in for a practice for their forthcoming anniversary, about September. Mr and Mrs Howard dropped in for half an hour or so. Jean Howard is often here with our Jean. They are great pals. David, Pam and Jean go out to their plot – about 2 miles out – for tennis.

A nice letter from Merle this morning. She seems sorry at the prospect of leaving their present home but no doubt she and all the family will be glad to be in their own property.

Grace wrote on Monday to Mary enquiring if there was any possibility of her coming up to relieve her. Since then, Grace has been able to engage a second maid so the position is not quite so desperate. A reply came from Mary this afternoon saying she will consider the matter but way does not open at the present. Grace has done wonders and so has everyone but there is a limit to one's powers. I am certainly on the mend and I hope soon to be able to do without special attention.

I suppose I must tell you what happened this morning. But please do not get a fright. Grace was sitting in my room, I am on the typewriter, listening to the morning prayers over the wireless. All of a sudden I was gasping for breath. David was on the stoep and after some patting etc they placed me on the bed. Had Grace not been in the room, I probably would have landed on the floor. It was a nasty experience whilst it lasted. A milder attack happened this afternoon when I was having my usual rest. It was not as severe as this morning's attack. I hope there will not be any repetitions – especially during the night. My little night light is very handy – burns all night.

Saturday 17th. Doctor called late last evening. Gave me another good overhaul and remarked that my heart, lungs and pulse were better than they had been for some time. He could not explain my shortness of breath during the day but there was no cause for worry or anxiety. I have had a good night. Owing to so much coughing, he advises me to wear the truss I have so as to

relieve strain on that portion of my anatomy. I am sorry to say that my old trouble (piles) has been giving trouble lately. Still I have much to be thankful for.

Much love to all as though named,

Some of the things beside my bed: Angiers Emulsion, Dr's medicine (horrible stuff) Heart tablets, eye drops - 2 sorts, bicarb soda, liquorice pdr, nose drops, nux vomica, smelling salts, and an ear trumpet. I ought to get well.

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday July 26th, 1948

My dear All,

It is just three p.m. and I want to get a dear all off by this afternoon's post. I do not know if I will be able to manage it. Today Ted is 56 and the day is being duly honoured. I have just phoned greetings to Mr Rossler, our Electrical Engineer, as it is his birthday also today. He is brother to the Cradock Electrical Engineer who I know very well. Ted has four years to go before he is entitled to retire. I am glad to say he seems in better health than he has been for some time. David left yesterday p.m. for Rhodes University. Norman went by a later train but they would most likely meet on the train somewhere this side of Cradock. Norman brought a nice parcel from Dot and reports all well there. He says they have definitely given up the idea of going to Port Alfred for Xmas this year. Dot sent some biltong, a cake, some table mats that I recognised etc., all very welcome.

On Friday last, whilst having a cup of Milo and a Marie biscuit, I found that one of my front teeth had broken off. It has been loose for some time. I still have about half a dozen of my own teeth in my head but most of them are loose and I expect will drop out before long.

I am glad to say that I am feeling much better, hardly cough at all. Dr has not been for nearly a week and was quite satisfied with my condition when last he examined me. I went to service yesterday morning and had the pleasure of hearing David conduct the service, which he did very well. He will not be coming home before Xmas. He had arranged to meet his brother, Harold as he passed through Bloemfontein last evening.

We were expecting to see Douglas and Evelyn as they were expecting to attend Len Ambler's son's wedding in Pretoria but a card from Evelyn this morning says they had given up the idea of going. We shall look forward to seeing them some other time. So far as we know, Rex is to be married on September 11th. I am glad to hear that he has given up smoking. Dr gave us some of his views on women smoking one day and the great harm it did to mothers and their babies.

Denis has sent us such a nice snap of Dee and himself and the two little ones. I must send it round. Their house is advertised for sale on August 5th. If he does not get his price for it, he will let it. Houses are very scarce there as everywhere else. Ted tells me that a new member of the Postal staff has to pay £8 per month for one room for himself and wife and one child. That is without meals.

Schools reopen here on 4th. Jean has passed in her harmony exam. We expect Neville, the little boy from the farm, next week. Charles has quite missed him.

I shall have to be seeing about Xmas cards soon.

I went by taxi with Grace to the station to see Norman pass. His train was up to time, ten minutes to six. This is about the latest I have been out in the afternoon for a long time. Mrs Walker lent her car and we went for a spin last week. Grace often drives her car. We did not go far but on the way back we called at Grace's old home, The Limit, and had tea with Mrs Brothers who is now living in the house.

Denis' address will be ?? Worcester Street, Grahamstown, from August 15th.

I must stop now, please excuse mistakes.

Love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday August 3rd, 1948

My dear All,

The August Bank Holiday is behind us and so far as we are concerned, passed off very quietly. We had expected Harold home for the long weekend but during the week he had word that the former Managers of the YMCA Hostel, where he and David stayed in Johannesburg, were going to Thaba-Nchu, not far from Bloemfontein. for the weekend and he had arranged to join them as they passed through Bloemfontein. Mrs Harrison's brother is acting Manager at the native institution there so he was glad of the opportunity of seeing the place. Pam had been there to a Youth camp last year so it was suggested that Jean might go this time as there was room in the car, only Mrs Harrison and her son were travelling. They called here for lunch on Saturday and returned yesterday about four and after refreshments, proceeded to Johannesburg. The weather was perfect and Jean enjoyed the change.

Both Grace's maid servants walked out without notice on Saturday (end of the month) so we managed without any cooking for Sunday's dinner and fared quite nicely on bread and cheese, fruit and custard. Sunday afternoon Mr Biggs called for us by car and took us to see the big Railway school where he is in charge of one of the departments. Over 1000 apprentices reside there in what was the Military aerodrome and which has since been taken over by the Union Government. All sections of railway work is taught there and the place is self contained. There is a large staff of instructors and they all have their meals together. They have their own sports fields and everything seems wonderfully arranged.

I went to church as usual on Sunday morning but I do not go out in the evenings yet. The weather is quite nice. I have not used the electric heater for some time now and am thinking of putting it away for next winter but of course, we may still have frosts.

I had a wire from Joe on Saturday morning saying they had moved into their new home and were comfortably settled. Douglas writes asking if I want to attend Rex's wedding. Of course I should like to be there but !!! Douglas says he has to be in Cape Town on business for a week about the end of August.

Alice Biggs will be passing here shortly on her way to Johannesburg. Hope to see her either on the forward or return journey.

The Mayoress sent me an invitation to a lunch in the Town Hall last month that she was giving to the old men of the town. I did not go, was not well enough for one thing and not knowing anyone who was going. A photo of those present appeared in the local press and it was evidently attended by ex burgers that fought in the Boer War.

I am glad to say my cold is much better. Grace said one week she thinks there must have been about 100 handkerchiefs in the wash – not all mine.

I got a dozen bottles of honey from Frank Short recently. Unfortunately two bottles were broken in the box. Very nice honey.

I am glad to hear that Rex has given up smoking. My Dr was talking about the great harm smoking did to young women and expectant mothers. So many people smoked directly after meals which was the very worst time to smoke.

David saw a copy of the life of Elizabeth Fry. He thought I would like to buy it which I did. It is quite interesting as far as I have gone.

The Quarterly Church meeting recently appointed the choir master as a deputation to wait on me and convey the Greetings of the meeting and to wish me a speedy recovery. I thought it was very nice of them. Rev Spon of the Presbyterian Church has been to see me. His mother and members of the family have invited Grace and I to their house this week to meet them

Mrs Florence is coming to spend a few days with us tomorrow. One of her grandnephews stays with Grace and attends school here. He has been here since the first quarter this year. School reopens tomorrow.

Yesterday I received a letter from Mom's cousin, Rosa Ensor, in Australia. The family used to live in the Cradock district. I have never met any of them but often corresponded. Speaking of our change of government she says "we have a very indifferent government here at present and are

suffering almost continually from strikes in gas, train and other services. We hope for better things after the General Election next year.”

Our Parliament opens on Friday next. I do not think they will be able to carry on for very long. The Nats have not a working majority fortunately.

On 7th it will be the anniversary of Aunt Emmie’s wedding and Uncle Bert’s birthday. He would have been 86.

On Thursday 5th, Denis’ house is being put up for sale. If he does not get what it cost him, he will keep it and let it at a good rental.

No more room so lots of love to all,

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday August 9th, 1948

My dear All,

August is always a sad month for me. On this date twenty seven years ago, our dear Harold passed over. It was a cold day at Kuruman and there was a slight fall of snow. I drew Harold's attention to it but he was too weak to see it. Harold was 28 years old and Denis was a baby of about three months. Harold was 28. I have written to Ruth and Denis. On the same date but 1906, Mom's mother passed away at the age of 71. Then on August 10th, Mom's father died in 1908 at the age of 81, just two years after. On August 11th 1894, we lost a stillborn baby girl.

August 7th was the anniversary of Uncle Bert's birthday and also the anniversary of his wedding day. Joyce Townshend's son will be 12 on August 19th. Aunt Letty will be 92 on August 29th which is a record for any of the Collett or Butler families.

I had a letter from Ruth on Saturday evening saying the house of Denis was not sold – the highest bid being £2500. His reserve was £2600. Negotiations were proceeding and they hoped to get more.

We have had four days visit from Mrs Florence, formerly of Vryburg. She was very interested in hearing news of all the members of the family circle. I was able to show her my collection of photographs – including those of Una's wedding. One day we arranged with Mrs Walker to take her and Mrs Florence and ourselves for a spin to see the size of the town, the river and various improvements that the Town Council is making. It is not twelve months since I arrived in Kroonstad but the number of new houses that have been erected in that time is surprising. The river is of course a great attraction. There is always water running which allows for boating, including motor launches. Both sides of the river are being made quite attractive and camping sites are also being provided. You have seen some of the snaps of picnics we have had there. We also called on the Presbyterian minister, Rev Pons. He was with David in Italy. He is unmarried but his mother and a sister are living with him. There are two children.

On Saturday Grace received a wire from David from the Synod at Graaff Reinet saying he has been accepted as a candidate for the ministry. This will mean that he will have to appear before the Conference at Cape Town in October. I think it will be about five years before he will be Ordained.

A nice letter from Joe last week. Says they got comfortably settled in on Thursday 29th. About the last item to be removed was a broody hen with one egg. The next morning to his surprise there was a chick. He is expecting 50 one day old chicks and he hopes to do well with his poultry. They had to have their Chesterfield suite repaired, the repairs cost £38!

It will be a year on September 5th that I arrived in Kroonstad. In that period I have used 250 postcards. I have just ordered another 250. I am hoping that the new budget will give us a reduction in postage to ½ instead of 1 penny. A card from Graaff Reinet says Alice is going to Johannesburg shortly and we hope to see her on her way home in about six weeks time. The local paper announced the fact that Jean had passed her harmony exam. She and her parents have been heartily congratulated. Clifford writes that he is kept busy on the farms sorting their wool. He tells me that his brother, Willie, has to leave the bank at the end of this month as he will be over age. He has no other job in prospect yet. I am glad to hear that Mary has arranged to have a room at Mrs Urie's in future. A nice letter from Rosa Ensor came a few days ago. I have sent it on to Mary for her mother to read.

I am glad to say that so far this winter I have not been troubled with any chaps (on my hands). There is no rainwater tank here unfortunately.

The Sunday School have been having practices in the house for the past few weeks. Last Thursday Doris Saunders, Mrs Howard, Mrs Florence and Grace spent the evening with me in my room whilst the children and teachers were singing in the dining room. The ladies were all busy knitting and talking. We had quite a nice evening. I was able to show them some of my scrap books and other curiosities. Yesterday (Sunday afternoon) there were 25 children and teachers practising the hymns for the forthcoming anniversary. Afterwards Ted and I called on Mrs

Leonard, widow of Arthur Leonard our next door neighbour in New Stockenstroom Street. There is only one member of the large family of Leonards still living.

Dot writes that Alan has been suffering from a sore heel and Dr says the arch of his left foot has dropped and he must give up playing Rugby for six or twelve months. It will be a great disappointment to the lad as he is very keen on the game. One of Trixie's children is staying with Dot for a while. Douglas has had a rush of meetings, including a trip to Kimberley with Evelyn and Emily and baby. Rex is busy putting a new surface to the tennis court and getting his house built. Evelyn has a whitlow on one finger. She has been troubled with them before. Arthur and Emily are also getting day old chicks. Grace has some meeting to attend this afternoon. The Report of the Friends meetings held at Stellenbosch in January has just come to hand.

Love to all,

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday August 17th, 1948

My dear All,

I generally try to write my dear alls on Mondays but this week I was not able to commence as I had developed a miserable cold and was obliged to spend the day in bed. Last Thursday was a hot day and I had taken off my cardigan during the hottest period and was sitting on the front stoep – in the shade – evidently the change was too sudden. About five in the afternoon, the Howards kindly motored me up to the hospital to see Mr Pierce for a few minutes but I had taken the precaution to put on my cardigan again in case of a change in the weather. Friday, Saturday and Sunday the cold in my nose was miserable. I was not able to go to service and have not been out of my room hardly since. I have started on another bottle of Angiers emulsion, Chamberlain's cough mixture, bi-carbonate of soda and drops in the nostrils and now I am able to sit up – 11 a.m. – and hope to be able to get this finished in time for post.

Douglas writes that he does not see how to work in a joint trip to Cape Town. For one thing, "time is so few" that he may even have to cancel the trip and he has to spend two days at The Strand and visit Stellenbosch and be in Kimberley on 30th so it seems that so far as I am concerned, the trip is "off". With regard to the wedding on 11th, I feel that I should be – or might be – in the way. Vryburg is not an easy place to get at from here. There is a through service on one or two days a week to Kimberley but it would mean sleeping a night there and catching a train the next morning to either Pudimoe or Vryburg. I have not been able to attend either of the weddings of the three married grandchildren so I expect I had better cut this one out of my programme.

Am sorry to hear that Evelyn is still being troubled with a whitlow on a finger but the last report was that it was getting better. Vivienne is still working at the Bank. We have not heard if Lynne is going to the wedding or Kingsley. We have not seen Mrs Florence again. She is still on the farm with her sister. She has a bad cold at present. Joe and Blodwen write that they are settling in quite nicely. They find the rooms are much smaller than what they have left. Rats at present are in the house, have caught three. They are very interested in the old letters to me that have reached them from Douglas and Dot. He wants to sell the lorry he bought on a sale a time ago but no doubt it was useful with the moving. He has a return of his former tummy trouble. Roy has had a touch of pleurisy and Trevor is troubled again with veldt sores. Thera Mahon (Uncle Owen's daughter) is spending some time in Uitenhage. She motored down with her two children recently. Dot has been without her wash-girl. Grace's girl turned up on Friday! Alan's school is very disappointed that he cannot play Rugby this season. I think he was "the hope of their side". He has done well in his school report. Trixie's little boy, who has been spending a few weeks with Dot, has now gone home again. He has been nice company for Joan. Reg has bought a chassis and may sell his Ford truck and buy a new car.

Joe has 49 baby chicks and all are doing well so far. He has made a brooder which is kept warm by an electric bulb. They have potatoes and peas, mint and parsley and tomatoes in the garden.

A letter from Cliff this morning report that his mother is much better which is good news. He is still busy with his wool sorting. He seems to be an expert at the job. His brother Ernest is going to live in the house at the bakery. This will be much more convenient as he has to be at work at six every morning. It is not such a nice house as he is living in at present but he can easily let or sell that. He will be much nearer to us – just opposite the main Post Office. I have not walked as far as that yet. Some days I walk round the block.

Harold Irons is attending the Synod at Bethlehem this week. He will be 21 on September 1st. He is not expected home for any celebrations.

A letter came from Mr West this morning mostly about church matters. Says he saw Mary recently. Mrs West, who went to Port Elizabeth for an X-ray examination, returned with a satisfactory report that no operation was necessary. She has had eight previously.

Our friend, Mrs Howard, is to go into hospital next week for an operation and expects to be detained for a fortnight.

A cousin of Ted's has recently been transferred here in the mechanical engineers department from Natal, Osborne by name. He has a nice lot of photos taken in Italy. I have had a few games of drafts with Charles and Neville. I have not played for many years. The set of men are what I brought from England and gave to David and Harold in 1934.

I must stop now as there are a few other letters I want to write for this post. I am none the worse for being up today so I hope my cold is finished.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday August 23rd, 1948

My dear All,

Last evening Douglas phoned to say he had been in bed for a few days on account of tummy trouble. He has decided to cancel his trip to Cape Town, or rather The Strand and Stellenbosch. Grace told him she does not see her way to go for a holiday whilst Jean is working so hard at her studies. She sits for her matric at the end of the year so it does not look as though we shall be going to the wedding on the 11th. News from Cape Town that Dudley is down with pneumonia is disappointing as he was looking forward to taking his holiday to Bechuanaland with Raymond in September. Arthur and Emily are going to Queenstown and bring Lynne back with them for the wedding and will pick up Cecily in Kimberley. She is to be bridesmaid. Evelyn and Emily and the bride elect have recently paid a visit to Kimberley shopping.

It is six years ago today that Mr Metcalf passed away. I notice in the Midland that Mrs Maree and Mrs Schoeman, who lived next door to us, have both died recently. Mrs Saunders was 82 on Saturday last. I think I mentioned last week that Charlie Collett has lost one of his grandsons from infantile paralysis, aged 18 after two days illness and another had been ill for three weeks with the same complaint and there was not much improvement. I am very sorry for the family.

Charles and Neville have each bought themselves a fountain pen for 4/- and they are very proud of their new possessions. I have just finished reading two books of South African interest, Commando and Our Lost Republic (O.F.S.) both very interesting.

Trixie Hudson (Mrs Tyson) has another son born on 16th and doing well. I had a card from Elizabeth Kelly who is still nursing in Liverpool. We used to see a good deal of her when in Cape Town. I notice in the papers that there is going to be an aeroplane service between a number of towns, including Kroonstad and Vryburg. I should think that it would only take a couple of hours to cover the distance. By rail it would take best part of two days, including changing trains. It took us seven hours by car.

I had a long letter from Aunt Katie Dudley. They have had the boring machine going for a few weeks and struck a good supply of water near the house the other side of the river. She says it is better water than they have anywhere on their side of the river. She says if Grace wants a holiday, she is welcome there except in October as she is going to Grahamstown for a change.

Mary is staying at the Poplars whilst Alison is away at Upington on holiday at Dorothy Murray's. She has a room at Mrs Uies where we used to live but she is not going to move in until Alison returns. Aunt Eliza writes the usual budget of news concerning her domestic arrangements. Of course she never goes out and does not see many visitors.

The Amblers are grandparents now. Their daughter, Shirley, has a son, born on 17th. Kingsley Jennings and family are going to visit Leslie Hudson and may be at Rex's wedding. Mrs Howard has gone into hospital today for a fortnight to undergo an "op".

Milner Brown writes thanking me for birthday greetings. He's got his own house in Bloemfontein. He is Senior Flying Officer and is on the permanent staff. He calls to mind the happy days in Vryburg when we kept open house for the young folk. He has a son at the Natal University studying for the Agricultural Science Degree.

Joe says they are settling down nicely. There is a lot of stuff already in the garden. His one day old chicks are doing well, only lost two so far. He wants to sell the lorry he bought on a sale and found it very useful in moving to their new home. Ted has suggested that it might be very handy here for the Xmas holiday. David might be able to drive it here when he comes home for the Xmas vacation. Ted has booked his annual leave from 27th December. He has had a letter from one of his brothers who has a house and grounds about 14 miles south of Durban which Ted is welcome to occupy. The lorry could be fitted up like Reg did his and it would accommodate all the lot of us. It could be sold here after the holiday. I wonder if it would be any use to Douglas? My cold is better but not quite right yet.

Grace went with Rev Griffiths to play the hymns at a country service yesterday as the regular organist was away or sick.

Lots of love to all, Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday August 30th, 1948

My dear All,

The latest news I have of Dudley Townshend is that he was expected to be sent to hospital for treatment with oxygen which cannot be applied in the home. Perhaps I may hear later news before posting this. I had a letter from Dudley's uncle at Durban, Phil Townshend, that his wife had recently died. I sent the communication to Joyce. I do not know if she had ever met either Mr or Mrs Phil Townshend.

Yesterday was Aunt Lettie's 92nd anniversary. I hope she had a happy day. Mary sent me one of her mother's letters to read. She is wonderfully active and well. Mary has not been too well lately and still has medical treatment.

Ruth writes that she has had a sick house, both she and John and Denis 'two children were all down with flu but were better when she wrote. John had also been troubled with gall stones. Ruth has been able to do more writing of late. She is always busy, Denis and Dee had safely moved into the house next door and were satisfied with everything. They are all looking forward to the Xmas holidays. Alice Biggs has another granddaughter, born in Pretoria on 21st. Alison has been spending some holiday at Upington but finds the heat very trying and may return to Cradock sooner than expected. What will it be like when the summer comes?

On Saturday next (September 4th) I shall have been in Kroonstad just a year. It seems just the other day that I arrived from Potgietersrus after that worrying experience with the Booking Office at Pretoria Station. I complained to the Railway Department about it but never got any satisfaction.

On Saturday evening there was a wedding in the Dutch Reform Church and Grace and Pam were interested in seeing it so I went with them. The first time I have been out in the evening for months. The weather was quite mild and I did not take any harm. I was interested in seeing the fine building which I should think could accommodate well over 1000 worshippers. The service is quite different to the Methodist's. The contracting parties stand before the communion rail and have not to answer any questions, just simply nod their heads. It was a long service. Of course the bridal party looked splendid.

On Thursday evening we listened in to the concert where Sir Thomas Beecham was the conductor. There were over 100 persons in the orchestra and didn't they make their instruments heard. It was wonderful music.

On Saturday afternoon, Grace attended a sale of furniture in the next street from here and after spending an hour and a half, we came home again. I was interested in a writing table, better than the one I brought up from Cradock. We got tired of waiting and did not see it sold. There was a beautiful lot of furniture there. Mrs Florence called the same afternoon to say goodbye. She left the same evening for East London where she has her home with Una.

Later. The second post has brought a card from Aunt Emmie saying Dudley was removed by ambulance on Saturday afternoon to Rondebosch hospital for further treatment. I hope we shall hear of his making good progress.

Ted's cold is getting better. For at least three months he has been sleeping in my room but I am glad to say that I am so much better that I have not given him much trouble lately.

A local preacher from Bloemfontein came up to take the services here yesterday. He is staying in the same house in Bloemfontein as Harold so he was able to take back with him birthday cakes and presents for his anniversary on Wednesday.

I notice an advertisement in Midland News of No. 24 New Stockenstroom Street for sale. If I am not mistaken, that is our old home. Mr Terblanche bought it after we left. I wonder what it will fetch now? I bought it for £500 and sold it for the same amount after living in it for some years. One of the cats here – there are two – bit Charles on the calf of his leg the other day without any provocation. It bled a good deal but after applying iodine, there does not seem to be any serious damage. The cat will no doubt be sent to a long sleep.

Dot reports the sudden death of one of their church ladies and a good worker. Her husband has taken the collections in church for the past 20 years. 1500 bundles of thatching grass has been

delivered for repairing the roofs of their two rondavels. What a mess they will be in if it rains during the repairs. One party there is building a £70 000 building which will include a bioscope hall, offices and shops and flats. Evidently he has plenty of faith in the future of Potgietersrus.

Joe writes that they have settled in nicely. They have got a lot of stuff planted in the garden. He has applied for a telephone. That will be nice, then each home will be able to talk to us, if the occasion needed it. His chicks are doing well. His Dr says his sickness has “got him stone cold” whatever that may mean. My doctor was attending a patient right opposite here and came across as we were sitting on the stoep. He was pleased to see how well I was looking, he said. I have made a start with the addressing envelopes for my Xmas cards, I try to do a few each day. Evelyn’s whitlow is much better. Arthur and Emily – and I presume the baby – have gone to Queenstown to fetch Lynn up for the wedding on 11th.

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Friday September 3rd, 1948

My dear All,

Somehow I feel that I must write another letter today. This day last year was the occasion of our leaving Potgietersrus for here. Reg and Dot had motored me as far as Pretoria where we had that disagreeable incident with the railway regarding my travelling by the mid-day train. I was in a very distressing state of mind then but I am thankful to say I am feeling much better now. There have been many incidents during the year but I am conscious that I have much to be thankful for, and I am thankful.

We were surprised and pleased to hear from Aunt Emmie this morning that after four days in hospital, Dudley was able to be sent home again. It appears that the bed was needed for an urgent case and that he was so improving under the treatment that his temperature had come down to 100 so it was considered safe for him to come home. We sincerely hope he will continue to improve. Of course he is far from well.

Grace, Ted and I saw Mrs Howard in the hospital on Wednesday morning. She has made a wonderful recovery and expects to be out on Sunday. She will go to a sister's for a while and later to a brother who is a farmer. The hospital here is a very fine building. The private wards are large which open on to a long closed in balcony.

Evelyn writes that she had a lot of visitors last Sunday – a dozen to lunch. Douglas is still busy addressing meetings about their dairy co-op business. Arthur and Emily were away at Queenstown to bring Lynne to the wedding and Cecily too. They are due back this day next week. Pam is wishing she could get to the wedding and is looking out for a chance by car. I should like to go but the train service is awkward and the roads are very bad we hear as there has not been any rain for many months.

A daily airmail service has been started this week whereby we can post at 3 p.m. and letters will be in Potgietersrus the next morning about five. This brings us much nearer together.

By the way, recently I sent round snaps of Mother's grave for inspection and also the snap of Denis and Dee and children. Neither have come back yet. There was a photo of Kroonstad in the Bloemfontein Friend this week and it shows Reitz Street very clearly but of course it does not show this house. On Wednesday, two huge lorries passed along here carrying two pieces of machinery from Cape Town for Johannesburg by road all the way. One weighed 20 tons and the other ten tons. They were too big to be conveyed by train as they were too wide and too tall for the railway track.

Charles had a slight accident whilst riding his bike and not looking where he was going, he collided with a tree. The machine was damaged but he escaped injury. It might have been more serious.

Evelyn sends me the following lines composed by Mrs van der Spuy, their neighbour.

“Our party line or Ode to Douglas”

“The 13 line is a very good line,
It's the Butler line – they say –
But he it was “as got it for us”
So why on earth should we make a fuss,
When he is BUSY! All the day.

But alas, alack
When Douglas gets back –
From his many trips away –
The folks on the line
Say “alas and alack”
For Douglas is back.

But then comes a time

When you don't feel so fine
You can't do a thing!
You can't even ring –
Then Douglas takes hold
Your problems unfold
You relax with a tear
Isn't Douglas a dear!

Joe writes that it is 25 years ago that he started work on the South African Railways at Durban. He still has 13 years to serve before he is entitled to a pension. He is trying to sell the lorry he bought for £140 so if anyone wants it, speak up. He does not think it would be any use to Ted for a picnic. Ted agrees. Lynne has sent him the film of her wedding but it is not too good – under exposed.

Dot writes that the men have started with the thatching. The lounge and dining room are to be painted and the stoep painted etc.

I had a nice letter from Mr Stock this morning and one from Miss Metcalf. So I am not quite forgotten.

No doubt you all will be thinking of the wedding on the 11th. I want to write to the young couple.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Wednesday September 8th, 1948

My dear All,

Days are getting appreciably longer and I hope to be able to get on faster with the many jobs I still want to finish. Schools are starting half an hour earlier. Jean and the two little boys have to be there by quarter to eight which means having breakfast shortly after seven. They come home about one p.m. and do not go back after dinner. Of course Jean has her music and home lessons and seems to always be studying and no doubt she will pass her matric at the end of the year. She has not made up her mind what she will do after that. She would like to go to University but that is an expensive outlook. I generally get up to breakfast on Sundays as that is the only day the family is altogether. Last week for instance, Ted was on early shift – 6 a.m. – three mornings. We have had some quite hot days but I am generally indoors by 4.30 or 5 pm. On Sunday afternoon I went for a walk to the river and back with Ted and Grace. It was rather far for me but of course we rested at the river. The willow trees are in leaf but the poplars are still quite bare. Great improvements have been made along the riverbanks and it will be very beautiful later on in the summer. On Saturday there was a school tennis match between the local school and 12 from Bethlehem. Players from the latter arrived by train late on Friday night. One of the girls shared Jean's room and we had two extra to meals. They left late on Saturday night. Kroonstad team won the match. Grace and I were motored in the afternoon to watch the game and whilst there, a nasty whirlwind passed over the court. It is generally understood that a whirlwind is a sure sign of drought. I hope not as a good rain would be very welcome here at present. I am sure Dot would rather not have any rain at present as the re-thatching of their two rondavels is in progress. Yesterday was Mrs Walker's birthday and Grace and I were invited to afternoon tea. There were no other visitors. She has always been very friendly, always calls me "grandpa". She cannot drive her car so Grace generally does that for her when she wants to go to Market etc. We three went to see Mrs Howard in hospital one morning. She is out of hospital now and will be going to her brother's farm for a month or so. She has made a wonderful recovery.

By the way. Where are the photos of Mother's grave and the group of Denis and family? I sent them round some month or more ago.

Kroonstad is rather a noisy town. There are two official hooters, one Railway and the other Municipal. Both sound their sirens at 5.30 a.m., 6.00 a.m., 6.30 a.m., 6.50 a.m., 11.50 a.m., 12 noon, 4 p.m., and 4.45 p.m. If there is a breakdown or any other cause, then the Railway hooter gives a number of long blasts. If there is a fire in town, the Municipal one gives a number of short blasts. Both are very loud, the Howards two miles out of town hear them. We are near enough to hear both but in the course of time, many people do not notice them at all.

Pam was thinking of going by train to Vryburg for the wedding on Saturday. This would have involved leaving here on Thursday and not getting back until late on Monday. However we all hope everything will pass off according to plan. We have not heard if a special photographer will be engaged as was done for Lynne's wedding but no doubt we shall hear how everything passed off. I am sorry none of my children – except Douglas – will be present except in spirit. Whilst Arthur and Emily were away at Queenstown, Douglas and Evelyn went to their farm to see how things were going. They collected five dozen eggs and some flowers. Everything was alright. Evelyn's finger is still painful but otherwise better. Mrs van der Spuy is back on the farm after having all her teeth extracted. We hear that Freda is nursing in Vryburg again. Dudley is a little better according to the last news. Aunt Emmie does not write every day. Make a note of Rex's new address: "Mayong", P.O. Saltpeterspan, Vryburg, Cape Province.

Douglas looks to be in Bloemfontein on September 24th. All the 50 000 shares in the new dairy co-op Company have been taken up. This will mean a lot of extra work for Douglas. Ted has fixed up wire gauze for all four windows in my room. They have been on hand all the time so did not have to buy new ones. Flies are beginning to make their appearance.

Dot writes about the work in Potgietersrus. She has now taken on the work of the Red Cross and is also representative of the Church on the local social welfare committee. This in addition to her Sunday School and other church work must occupy a great deal of her time and energy. I hope

she will not overdo it and have a breakdown. It is wonderful how they manage to raise all the money for all the different organisations. They have recently opened a maternity home apart from the hospital.

David writes that he would like to stay an additional year at Rhodes and qualify for M.A. Harold had a happy birthday in Bloemfontein. No more for this edition so will close with lots of love to all until next time. It is windy and dusty today.

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday September 13th, 1948

My dear All,

I do not know if I shall be able to do a sheet this afternoon. All the morning I have been typing separate letters to one and another and it takes some time for an inexperienced typists like myself to get through all I want to do. First things first. The news regarding Dudley is that after four days in Rondebosch Hospital, he was home again. The bed was required for another urgent case. His temperature has gone down somewhat and coughing is less. He is able to rest better but still has to be kept quiet. Dr is tapping fluid from the affected part but warns them that the progress will take a long time. The weather has been bad, lots of rain. I have asked many observers about hail storms falling at night but very few observers have been able to satisfy me. Now in Aunt Emmie's letter received this morning, she says a heavy hail storm fell during the night.

I have no news to report on the wedding on Saturday. Douglas phoned that he was motoring Lynne and presumably Cecily back to Kimberley on Sunday afternoon. Of course appropriate telegrams were dispatched in time and no doubt comments regarding the dresses will appear in due course. I sincerely hope the weather was kind to them. Here it was a terrible day – especially in the morning. The wind did blow and the dust did rise and generally it was a day to be thankful that I had not to be out. I was sorry for Jean and other school children who had to appear on “floats” parading the town all the morning in a money raising effort for funds for a school hall. I watched the floats go by from my window. Some of them were quite good.

On Saturday evening Grace Ted and Pam went to the bio and had a very amusing picture to see. The actor was an expert at making people laughter by his comical expression etc. The whole audience was splitting with laughter from start to finish, so much so, that Grace was quite upset and had breakfast in bed the next morning.

Yesterday afternoon we had a visit from Mr and Mrs Midgley and his brother who works in the Standard Bank here. Mr and Mrs called to see me last year at Potgietersrus when they were on their way to the Protectorate where he is Government Native Commissioner, resident in Francistown. They are Friends, have no children of their own but have adopted a boy and a girl. They are on four months leave and are travelling by car – a £600 Nash, comfortably fitted up so that all four can sleep in the car. They have wireless and every convenience laid on for cooking etc. From here they go to Swaziland then back to Basutoland, then to Queenstown, Cradock, East London, Port Elizabeth and the Garden Route to Cape Town. They are visiting all Friends and Mission Stations as far as possible. They were in Cradock some years ago and saw Aunt Eliza and all her curios and hopes to see her again on this trip. She has corresponded with Mary for several years but never met her and she is looking forward to seeing her about Xmas time. They are of course very interested in native work. I showed them my room and they were quite pleased with it. I thought as they would be seeing you who have not been here, you would be also interested. They were sorry they were not able to go to the Friends yearly meeting at Stellenbosch last January. The little girl remembered seeing me at Potgietersrus and Little Joan amusing her with a top which mooed like a cow every time you turned the top upside down. They look to call on us in late December or early January on their way back to Francistown. We shall be pleased to see them.

Last week I sent Uncle Jack Collett cabinet size photos of Mom's parents as I had duplicate copies of them. I had a suitable mount for the two in one frame and Pam very nicely typed the following which I pasted on to the mount:

JOHN COLLETT and MARY COLLETT
1826 – 1908 1836 – 1906

Monthly divine services were held in their hospitable home, GRASS RIDGE, for many years prior to the building of the METHODIST CHURCH AT FISH RIVER STATION IN 1900.

Jack has promised to have it suitably framed and hung in the new vestry at Fish River. The photograph taken at the opening of the church I also gave and that is hanging in the vestry.

Photographs of members of the Vryburg Hospital Board, when Mrs H Tilbrook was Matron, and the photo of the first aeroplane that ever came to Vryburg and in which I was the first civilian to go up in it – I have sent to the Vryburg Hospital Board.

Ted finds the typewriter useful every week for typing his letter to David and Harold. No doubt they find it easier to read than his writing!

I have not finished all my notes but “time is few”.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
September 18th, 1948

My dear All,

I shall not date this edition until I have a proper letter for you. What I propose doing now is to give you a number of items which have been left over from previous issues.

On a couple of occasions recently I have been unfortunate and dropped my watch. The first time it did not affect its working but the second time it has caused it to lose much time. This caused me to make another discovery. I put the watch to my ear to hear if it was ticking and found that I could not hear at all, I have known for some time that I was getting deaf. I hear very little of the general conversation that goes on. One of these days I will get Dr to syringe my ears and that may improve matters. I hope so.

Ted has lent me a small book of morning and evening devotions by Rev C.H. Spurgeon, the famous preacher of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, London. I was very interested to find that the book was purchased by Grace and given to Ted. It was bought at Butler Brothers and bears the cost mark in my handwriting.

I think I have previously mentioned the call we had from the Midgleys. They are very nice people and they are looking forward to seeing Friends wherever they go on their long tour. Mrs Midgley has a brother in Queenstown. His address is 6a King Edward Road, Queenstown. I hope Lynne and Gerry will see them. They look to be there about Xmas time and will go on to Cradock from there. I gave them Lynne's address.

Grace has put down grass in the front garden but so far there is no sign of its coming up. Talking of gardening, when I was in Cradock I bought one of the new plants (seeds) that grow without soil as a present for Grace. She has nursed it well and now it is flowering. The flower is calendula. It stands in my window and the position seems to suit it quite well. Of course there is some chemical that is added to the moss and water but it is wonderful that it should thrive at all. Will try some other seed later on. The vines by the side stoep are growing nicely. They were heavily pruned in the winter. Those in the back garden are alive but have hardly started.

I had a letter from Uncle Gervase on Thursday last. The first I have had from him since I left Cradock in May last year. He says Hope has been down with measles, her temperature for three days was 105½. They are expecting Barbara and baby and Derick and Roslin and their baby shortly. I think they will be travelling with George and Hilda Collett who have been visiting them and the Game Reserve.

In a recent letter from Harry Collett (Collett Siding), he says he is struggling along in the drought. Sheep are doing well but cattle feeding is a difficulty. He has to pump water to keep crops growing for feed. At Greyville – his son's farm nearby – the river water keeps strong. Three sons are asbestos mining near Pietersburg, Transvaal – their wives living in the town. (I hope Reg and Dot will make a point of calling on them.) Ethnie – who stayed with us in Cradock when I was going blind, is living not very far from Jim Collett, they, Ethnie and family, are tree planting. Myra, Harry's sister, who was very ill a few years ago, is keeping fairly well. You may remember when we were at Cape Town, his daughter, Mary, brought her father for a serious "op" from which he made a wonderful recovery. He says he still does a lot of farm work and is keeping well. When Mom and I visited them years after, he was busy ploughing, climbing windmills etc. He and I have much in common.

Dot wrote on 13th that they had all been to Pretoria for the weekend to see an opera in which Alan was taking part as a girl. He acted with great success. He was dressed with a blue "doek" on his head, white blouse and bustle skirt of striped material. In fact Dot describes him as "a lovely girl". He sang in the choruses as an alto and thoroughly enjoyed himself all the time. The opera was staged each night for a week by the boys' school. No other P.P.R. boys took part. It must have been a great success. Jean stayed with a nurse girl at Mrs Beeton's, a former neighbour of Reg and Dot's. They all spent the night there and thoroughly enjoyed the visit. They took Joan to the miniature railway and fountains. The thatching of the boys' rondavel is finished and they are moving into it whilst theirs is being done.

A letter of thanks for congratulations on the arrival of the baby came on Thursday evening from Trixie. She says she is very proud of her new son. The oldest son spent a few weeks with Reg and Dot before the new arrival. He had a very good time there.

On Thursday evening we also received a long letter from Lynne from Queenstown. This gave us the first intimation of the wedding having taken place on 11th. No doubt we shall hear from Grass Ridge in due course. Lynne also tells of her trip to Grahamstown where she saw a good deal of Ruth, Denis, Dee and of course the children who are described as "lovely". They had the use of Arthur's car whilst he and Emily and baby were with her people on the farm. They had a good trip but the roads were dreadful. They spent one night at Seven Fountains, with an Uncle and Aunt of Gerry's. Whilst in Grahamstown, she had the pleasure of seeing David and Norman as well the others I have mentioned.

Also on Thursday evening, we had a phone call from Joe at Uitenhage. The telephone he applied for has been installed and he was spending a little money in letting us hear the good news. I am very glad he has got it as it is nice to feel that each home is now connected so that we can, if need should arise, talk direct to each. He reported that Blodwen was not too well but otherwise they were alright, except for veldt sores. He has sold the lorry for £135, about £30 more than he gave for it. This goes to paying off for his house. I had mentioned in one of my letters to him that perhaps we might make a plan to exchange houses for the summer holidays. Grace and family want to get to the sea somewhere and they were thinking of going up country as they did two summers ago. Now there is a snag in the plans as Pam finds that one of the senior typists at the Land Bank also wants her holidays during the school holidays as well and they both cannot be away at the same time. Ted has to take his months from December 27th and Joe and family do not want to go so far away. The guest farm at Kendrew was very convenient for them. Joe says their house will be empty and we are welcome to make us of it if we want to. Ted's brother has a place on the south coast not far from Durban but that is generally considered too hot except in the winter. So what will eventually be decided it is not possible to say at this stage.

For your convenience I give you the following phone numbers which I suggest you keep in your writing pads for convenient reference: Aunt Emmie, Cape Town 6.2745. Douglas, Vryburg 1311. Arthur, Pudimoe 221. Eric Fear, Pudimoe 213. Leslie Hudson, Pudimoe 211. Mike Meyer, Pudimoe 222. Ruth, Grahamstown 886. Joe, Uitenhage 1122. Dot, Potgietersrus 24. Grace, Kroonstad 60. Ernest Butler, Cradock 91.

Those who were troubled with rheumatism should try the following remedy which appeared in the Bloemfontein Friend of September 15th 1948:

"Take a glass of hot water first thing in the morning, instead of the usual cup of coffee or tea. Then 15 minutes after, take a glass of cold water, add a teaspoon of Epsom Salts and half a teaspoon of table salt and drink at least one hour before breakfast. Drink as much cold drinking water during the day as your system can stand normally – don't overdo it; about 10 or 12 pints a day will be ample. After a week, you will have no more pain, and your rheumatism trouble will be gone. But continue this treatment for a month to clear the whole system. If you feel better after ten days you may reduce the salts to half the above, but not the water – rather take more water." It is worth trying. The snaps of Mother's grave have arrived back safe and sound. Thanks.

It was quite a while since we had a game of Halma but last week Mr Osborne, a cousin of Ted's, spent the evening here and four of us enjoyed a game. Grace won the first round and Pam the second. The two little boys play drafts with me occasionally. We got a supply of walnuts from Bladens recently. The price of them locally is 4/3d per lb. I noticed that Mrs Paterson, widow of the former Town Clerk of Cradock, died recently in Cradock at the age of 92. She was a very quiet old lady. Her father was Church of England minister in Cradock many years ago.

Merle, I think it was, who recently describes how the children are walking on stilts. I remember using them when at boarding school but it is a very risky mode of locomotion. Joe refers to Uncle Owen being troubled with earache, I think it was. I am sorry as it is such a distressing complaint. His eyesight has been a great trouble to him for some years.

Dot mentions that Norman is a good cricketer, specially mentioning his powers in bowling. Keep it up Norman. The Australian team is coming out to South Africa. The local committee

organised raising funds for the starving children in Europe, a mile of pennies. I have not heard how much was raised but Ted and his cousin worked it out. It would require 56,320 pennies and their value would be £234.13s.

I started typing this letter on Thursday afternoon and evening. It is now Friday afternoon and I have about finished referring to my various notes. It is no advantage posting it today as there is no delivery on Sundays. Posting it tomorrow it should reach each home on Monday morning. Perhaps news of last Saturday's wedding may be arriving tomorrow which I can refer to.

I am just finishing reading a book written by Rev W M Douglas, formerly of Cradock, on Rev Andrew Murray and his message. Mr Douglas gave Mary a copy and she has given it to me. Rev Murray was a remarkable man and leader of the Dutch Reform Church, a most Godly man, and author of many books. He mourns the low state of the religious life of the churches and I fear his criticism would hold good today. I want my grandsons, who are looking forward to entering the ministry, to read the book. Mr Murray lived to nearly 90. I remember being introduced to him when sitting on the stoep at Rev Perold's house in Vryburg. In one chapter he refers sadly to the fact that during the Boer War, there was no minister of any church in South Africa who was drawn to work for the co-operation of the two nations but one Quaker Editor of a Midland newspaper (my brother James) drew attention to the fact.

Saturday morning. The Stellander arrived this morning and I see there is a nice account of the wedding last Saturday. I am sending the paper on to Lynne as I always do. Reg and Dot still get the paper. Perhaps she may send her copy on to Joe. I see the honeymoon was being spent at Rustenburg, Transvaal. There is no news regarding Dudley, this is a good sign as Aunt Emmie says we must take no news as good news. I did a little shopping up town this morning, including the purchase of 100 white envelopes. I have practically finished using the window envelopes, which I know you do not like. Those that I have been using were given me by the late Mr Thomas. I get very few myself as I pay cash for most things I buy. Today is Aunt Eliza's 88th anniversary. Hope she is having a comfortable day. I do not know who is staying with her now as I understand the young woman is away. Mary has not been at all well for sometime. The last I heard was that she needed a walking stick with a rubber ferrule. I hope she has got one by now. Tomorrow will be Joe's birthday. For him too I hope he will have a restful day. He has sold his lorry and finds plenty to do in his new house. Next Friday it will be little Joan's fourth anniversary. She has lots of little friends and I can picture her having a party on the beautiful lawn in front of their house.

This last week I have been able to get through a lot of correspondence. My table is practically clear of letters. In addition, I have been able to finish addressing all my envelopes for Xmas cards, so I shall not be rushed later on.

Tomorrow is the Sunday School anniversary here. Ted is still Superintendent and is hoping for a good turnout. Rev Griffiths takes both morning and evening services and the Salvation Army Captain is giving the afternoon address as Mr Griffiths has three services in the country. They need another minister here as there is plenty of work to do, both in town and country. If the weather is fine, I hope to attend each service. I have not been to an evening service for some months. You see I am gradually getting my independence back! I am thankful to be able to say I am keeping fit but still do not do much walking. The stump of the tooth that broke some time ago is beginning to ache so I suppose I shall have to visit the dentist before long.

Douglas expects to be in Bloemfontein on 24th. Do not know if he will come this way. We hear that George and Hilda Collett are returning from Transvaal shortly and I hope they will call here. Alice Biggs will be returning too so may see her as well.

I do not know if I should apologise for inflicting three pages on you this week. I don't know how I have done it. If it is too much, please say so and I will try to do better another time! Writing letters is one of the pleasures left to me. I often think and sometimes say how useless I am. So little that I can do and am willing to do, but way does not seem to be open. I have offered to keep the church books, and other work but nothing happens.

I must really stop now and do up the envelopes and take the post to the pillar box at the corner of the block.

Lots of love to all, Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
September 22nd, 1948

My dear All,

Douglas has sent us some account of the wedding on 11th. I must pick out the most interesting as I cannot send his letter to everyone – it would take too long to get round. He says there were 140 guests at the reception which was held in the garden of Mr and Mrs Rowe. The bride looked charming and the mere groom, smart. The weather was kind to them. (Here it was an awful day, very windy.) Baby Leslie is the picture of health and joy, the teeth through. We took the girls to Kimberley on Sunday afternoon. Lynne stayed with them at the hotel and left by the 2.20 train on Monday afternoon and arrived back at Queenstown on Tuesday. We returned back to home as soon as she had left. I usually bring back some raw fish so we had supper at Maude and Mike's. Eric and Freda were also there. We slept at Theronrust and arrived home after going to see how things were there. Mason was not there. I cannot give a description of the dresses. I know I got a new pair of shoes and tie! Cecily looked very pretty in blue morocco and Evelyn wore blue morocco too and looked much younger somehow! She walked beside her hat and husband! Lynne was very bright and well and a great help to everyone. Rex's pal who went all through the war with him was present. All the Rowe family – three girls and a boy, are all married – met for the first time together for nine years. One girl and her husband were taken prisoners in Java and were two years in Japanese hands. After the reception, Rex's car (Mr Rowe's) was parked against the kerb already loaded. The bride was already in the car so a crowd of young bloods piled in too and left Rex outside. After all was ready, he tried to back into the street and was held fast against the curb by the boys. When he did manage to back, he continued in reverse down the street and off down the lower road. It saved them being held back and a lot of confetti. They went to Rustenberg for a week and were back to play tennis (mixed doubles) on Saturday and were off again on Sunday. That is most of what Douglas says about the wedding. Mrs van der Spuy sent a postcard saying as she had had all her teeth out and she did not appear in public but saw a good deal by looking through the window. So much for the wedding.

On Saturday afternoon, Rev Griffiths phoned asking if I would care to go with him to one of his country services on Sunday afternoon. I gladly accepted as I have not been anywhere in the country. He took his two little boys and a lady and gent and their little boy as company whilst he was conducting the service. The place is about 50 to 60 miles there and back, Hanniman, not very far from the new goldfields. There are three preaching places, all within about a dozen miles, which are visited once a month but on this occasion, all three were asked to join in a central spot. Service was held in what appeared to be an old shop. There were three seats each side of the aisle and accommodated about sixty people. Practically all seats were occupied. During the service a baby was christened. We left town about 2.30 and got back about 6.15. We were invited to afternoon tea by one of the congregation, the manager of a lime works there. Coming back I saw a sight that I shall never forget. It was nearly time for the sun to set, and it did set before we got back, but the clouds were too wonderful for any adequate description. From the horizon to about one third upwards it was very dark and threatening for rain. Immediately above the dark clouds were large portions of sky with fleecy clouds of great height like mountains with numerous peaks and all appeared as though they were snow-capped. The setting sun was shining on them. I have not seen the Swiss Alps but I do not think anything could be grander than what I saw. How I wished I could have photographed it. I have seen many beautiful sunsets but nothing to compare with this.

The weather had turned very cold so I did not go to the evening Sunday School anniversary service. We had some rain during the night and a little water had collected in Ted's wheelbarrow and was converted into ice. Sharp frost has fallen since and I am afraid that some of the fruit crop will be lost. Farmers are needing rain for their wheat crops. Needless to say I have put the electric heater into use again. It was too cold to go to S.O.E. Lodge last evening, as I was hoping to do, as I have not been attending during the cold winter nights. Mr FitzHenry, Mars Armstrong's brother who is in the Bank here, is secretary. He called after work advising me not to go out. Mrs Armstrong, you will remember, used to live close to us in Dundas Street. He says she seldom

writes to him. His brother and wife, who live in Johannesburg, have been on a visit to them at the Addo Game Reserve.

I had a nice letter from Cecily yesterday. She is going home on Thursday for the short holidays and says she will miss Kingsley as he is not going home this time. He was not at the wedding either.

Wednesday evening. Letter from Dot just to hand. All well, alterations in progress. Joan's birthday. They have had very windy and cold weather.

If any of you can get a copy of Picture Post for September 4th 1948, you will see a series of photographs of operations for the removal of catarrh. From these you will have some idea of what I had to undergo.

Mr and Mrs Smyter paid us a call. Mrs is sister of Mrs Stainer whose husband died recently. The Smyters are still living at Camps Bay. He has retired. Has promised to come and see us again.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Wednesday September 29th, 1948

My dear All,

This will be my last of the series for this month. The month has gone very quickly. In three months time we shall be closing the year! Saturday will be Grace's birthday and the following Monday, Douglas has his anniversary. So we are all getting older.

I am sorry to say that I have had another three days in bed. On Thursday we had a very cold wind when I went to post at the pillar box and must have taken a chill. This started my nose trouble going but am glad I was able to be up yesterday. I spent some of the time by putting my Xmas cards into their envelopes so have saved having to do that job later on. Of course they will not be posted yet.

The latest news I have had from Cape Town is that Dudley was allowed up last week for a short time but not allowed out. It is nice to know that he has turned the corner. He has been ill for over seven weeks. I wonder if Joyce will take him to Eric for a change or perhaps to Cradock. No doubt we shall hear what their plans are when he is able to travel. His tickets were already taken and seats booked when he suddenly took ill. We do not expect any more cold weather here. Today is quite hot. Shall be looking out for a cool site.

We were hoping to have a call from George and Hilda Collett on their way back from visiting Derick and Roslin but a note came saying they were returning another way. We also missed seeing Alice Biggs who passed through on a night train.

In a letter from Mary she says that Dr is making arrangements for her to go into a private ward in the hospital in about two weeks time. We sincerely hope that this does not indicate that there is any serious change in her state of health. Alison is expected back from Louisvale.

So far we understand Aunt Eliza has not any competent assistant living with her. I do hope some suitable plan will be made for her comfort.

Pam and Jean are going to Bloemfontein on Friday to attend a Youth Convention. They expect to be back on Tuesday morning. Here there is to be a Camp as last year. I hope the weather will be as agreeable this time as last. I hope to be able to attend same. This time last year, Clifford Saunders was here. He is still very busy sorting farmers' wool clips.

Mr Smyter spent most of yesterday afternoon with me. He is very interested in my scrap albums. He has collected many similar. He is now living at Camps Bay and is in close touch with Mr and Mrs Rouse who were in Vryburg and I knew them very intimately in business etc. I had lost touch with them for some years.

In Dot's recent letter, she expressed appreciation of my three page effort. The re-thatching of both their rondavels is finished and the front stoep is still to be improved by erecting steel windows instead of the wire gauze. The title of the comic picture which caused Grace to be upset recently was "The Wonder Man". I think Dot wants to get it for their local bio. Norman is spending the short holidays at Fort Beaufort. David is staying at Rhodes. Kingsley, too, is not going home but hopes to get to Cape Town. They have to feed themselves at University if they don't go away during the short holidays.

Joe and family are going to the Rest Farm for two weeks to January 3rd. It looks as though we may accept their offer of the use of their house. What we shall do for the other fortnight is not settled yet. As the workshops do not work on Saturdays now, he is able to do some marketing. Potatoes are 17/- for 38 lbs, oranges 3/9 a bag and other things in proportion. They are very pleased that they have got the phone laid on. Blodwen is still far from well and is in Doctor's hands again.

As we are expecting visitors presently, I must not stop to write more but want to catch the post. So goodbye for the present.

Lots of love to all,
Charles

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday October 5th, 1948

My dear All,

It appears that winter is past and summer has arrived. We have experienced some very hot days lately and in consequence have put away the eiderdown, the kapok shake up mattress is now under the vi-spring mattress and my old light waistcoat and jacket (Reg's) has been brought into use. The warm slippers which Dot gave me for last Xmas are put away for further use as may be required. I sleep with the bottom sashes of the window wide open and the door shut so as to prevent a draught over my bed. Ted has put up wire gauze over each window so cats cannot come in. My room gets the sun most of the day and in the afternoon it is hot, but I can always go into the dining room and do my typing there and sometimes have my afternoon nap there. It feels as though we are going to have a very hot summer and so far no rain has fallen. I hope we shall not have floods when it does come.

Grace and Douglas have had their birthdays since I last wrote. Pam and Jean went with two other girls on Friday night to attend a Methodist Young Peoples' Convention and Charles had plenty of playfellows around him so we were comparatively quiet. Dot phoned on Sunday morning greetings from all at Potgietersrus. The repairs to the rondavels etc were completed and they were getting straight after all the work was done. Alan was home and Joan very happy. Her parents had given her a tricycle for her birthday and she had a party and many presents. I think Douglas had a quiet time as only Cecily was at home I think. They phoned on Sunday evening and reported all well. I only listened to the conversation which was very weak. Sometimes the voices came over quite clearly. Rex and bride are home and settled on their farm. I have had letters recently from Arthur, Lynne, and Cecily, all very bright and cheerful. Douglas and Evelyn look to pay us a visit one of these days but he has such a lot of travelling, it is not always convenient to get away. Needless to say we shall be very pleased to see them.

We were disappointed in not seeing George and Hilda and Roslin and her baby on their return from the Transvaal but they did not come this way. A Mrs Hart and her husband have been on a short visit to Graaff Reinet. They are connected to Alice Biggs and they kindly brought us some Brooklyn oranges which were greatly enjoyed.

We visited the camp at the river twice. The camp fire was quite good and the Sunday afternoon service was also good. A young lady belonging to the Evangelical Band from Cape Town gave an address. I found afterwards she was a granddaughter of Joshua Haasbroek of Vryburg. Ted also took part and I, being the oldest present, had the opportunity of saying a few words.

We thought Mr Howard was away at Lindley with his wife on Sunday morning so we did not wait for him to call for us for church. I walked down, taking advantage of shady streets, but it was far too hot and I shall not attempt it again. Charles spent most of his time at the camp but came home to sleep. Camp broke up on Monday afternoon. Pam and Jean arrived home in the small hours this morning, having quite enjoyed the change which they say was well worthwhile. I am glad they met Mrs Longman, a relation of Mom's and the Saunders. Of course, Harold was there so the girls were able to meet some of his friends. Harold may be home for the coming weekend.

During the few days I had to stay in bed last week, I managed to finish putting my Christmas cards into their envelopes. I had previously typed the addresses as my writing is not as good as it used to be and I think I was able to type quicker than writing. They are now all ready for posting early in December. Over 500 of them.

I feel proud because I received a personal letter from Aunt Letty a few days ago. She is 93. If I should reach that age, I don't expect to be able to write such a letter. I have already acknowledged it. She mentions Florrie as having been laid up with bronchitis. Of course she is anxious about Mary not being well. Kathleen hopes to send her son to college next year.

Lynne writes that she will not be going home this Xmas as Gerry only has three days holiday. She wishes he was a farmer, it's a grand life she says. Gerry is much better in health since he got married, the result of her good cooking, of course. They are trying to get a larger house but so far have not found one.

I wonder if any or all of you have in your gardens the small buttonhole chrysanthemum? I saw them at Gladys Collins and Aunt Kate, Grass Ridge. The latter has sent Grace some roots and I hope they will grow. The flowers are very small but pretty. I am sorry to hear that Aunt Gladys Norman has trouble with her spine. A Specialist has discovered that some bones are displaced. They have been to East London.

Ernest and Doris Saunders have moved from Hospital Hill to the house attached to their bakers shop. This will make it more convenient for Ernest who often has to do night work. Incidentally they will be within easy walking distance from us. They have been very kind in helping with their car and often take us for a spin.

Dot says they have not had rain yet but lots of wind. It seems to be the cry all over the country. Mr and Mrs Amm of Potgietersrus has recently made a very fine gift to the natives of his area by presenting them with a school building or three classrooms in memory of their son who was killed a few years ago whilst flying, with two other schoolfellows who were on their way to a reunion of old scholars of Kingswood, Grahamstown. Rev J.B. Webb and five native ministers were present at the function. Dot no doubt was there as the Amms are great friends of theirs. I have also been on the farm. They have thousands of orange trees and it was on this farm where I saw over 2000 pigs.

Dr Lapehne who attended me at Potgietersrus, has left by car for South West Africa where he is going to practise. He trucked all his furniture which cost him £90 for carriage. I wonder if it arrived safely? He was present at Joan's birthday party and was rewarded with a kiss!

Ruth tells me Dick is in Pietersburg (P.O. Box 55). I wonder if Reg ever comes across him. His family is in Rhodesia. A Miss Versveld spent the evening here last week, she is a friend of Pam. She remembers Rex very well! Now she is a radiologist at the local hospital here.

Ruth also tells us that Iris was to undergo a serious operation in Springs hospital last Sunday. They have bought a new house near where her husband is teaching.

Denis has bought a second-hand car much to the enjoyment of all concerned. You must look out for some more of Ruth's articles in the Outspan.

I had a letter from Mrs Sorrie, she does not like living in Alice. She cannot get about as she suffers from sore feet. Rev Sorrie had to go to Kimberley a little while ago as his brother was very ill in hospital. He has recovered now. I do not know if he is supplying the pulpit at the Presbyterian Church in Alice.

I do not remember if I told that Carry Roberts, formerly of Cradock, died at Cape Town recently.

Mr Cloete who has lived off and on in Kroonstad and friend of Ted and Grace came to see me a few days ago. At one time he and his wife (since dead) were living in one room near us at Observatory. Mom and I used to visit them. Ted tells me that when David was a baby, he was nearly dead and Mrs Cloete put her finger down his throat and removed the phlegm that was choking him.

I have not had any news from Cape Town for some days (the weekend holiday generally disorganises the post). But the last news was that Dudley was up and dressed but not allowed out yet. No news is taken as good news in such cases. Not a word or post from anyone today.

Grace has removed the bed that Ted was using when I was so ill. He was very attentive, a great help when help was needed.

Tuesday three p.m. A few drops of rain are falling and I hear thunderstorms so I hope we may be in for a good downpour.

I think I have about exhausted all my supply of news so had better get on with the envelopes and do the next job I am still keeping pretty well, my nose and eye still leak and I bring up a quantity of phlegm during the night but on the whole I am much better. It is not quite so hot as yesterday. Only one communication and that from Hilda George, thanking for congratulations for their wedding day.

Goodbye and lots of love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday October 8th, 1948

My dear All,

I cannot seem to be able to get a move on this morning. I was up about 6.30 and have been busy ever since. However, it is a nice day as we have had a few showers since I last wrote. The grass Grace planted in the front garden is showing up nicely. Weeds and insects flourish and seem to get the upper hand.

It has been a busy week with many engagements. The school has given another "rag" for school funds, there has been an evening "do" for the matric class in which of course Jean has a leading part to take. The Presbyterian Church has been celebrating its Jubilee with a bazaar and special services etc., Remembrance Day special united service and laying of wreaths at the War Memorial and then to close the day, a special male voice choir of about 30 to 40 voices gave a song evening after the close of the evening service in the Presbyterian Church. The Rev McDowal of Grahamstown conducted same. Ruth and John belong to his church. Grace and I attended the service which was very impressive. We introduced ourselves to him at the bazaar on Saturday morning. Ted guessed the correct weight that had been given (10½ lbs) which had been given already cooked and he only paid 1/- for the privilege of guessing. Rev McDougall knows David at Rhodes and speaks very highly of him and of course he knows Denis and family very well.

On 11th will be the anniversary of Mother's birthday and the next day, 12th, is Mary's. I hear via Cape Town that there is improvement in her condition. I saw in the Tribune that Dr C Anderson of Oudtshoorn had a leg amputated a few months ago and died last month. I knew him in connection with the YMCA work in Cape Town. Mr Phillipson, who ran a fancy work business opposite Roberts in Cradock, has also passed away. He was Dr Anderson's brother.

I hear Billy Moorcroft is married recently. I wonder when Joyce will be married? Another old Cradock boy has been to see me, a Mr Mundell, who used to work on the Railway. He knew brother James better than me. He attends Church here.

There is a Mr Bubb who works in the Post Office with Ted and at one time lived with Grace and Ted in this street. He and his wife were here in the afternoon and in course of conversation I mentioned Graham Botha, ex chief archivist. He said his son was with him up north in the Signalling Brigade. He was a very fine man. Clifford has had a very fine testimonial from the Wool Growers Association complimenting him on his sorting and classifying wool for different farmers. He is doing Grass Ridge wool now. The mudguard of DS new car was bashed in whilst in Vryburg recently. Fortunately no one was hurt. Jean's school raised over £115 in two days for school funds recently. At the farewell party on Saturday night, Jean was presented with a beautiful bouquet of lilies and other flowers.

Hilda Daniels has been under an "op" in St Joseph's Hospital recently. Her daughter is to be married at Walmer on December 18th and will be sharing the house for the present. I wrote to old Mrs Tyler for her birthday recently. I think she is over 90. Miss Hicks' sister has given Grace such a nice necklace, white metal beads. It goes nicely with her dresses – one at a time of course.

Dot says Alan has German Measles at school. Hard lines. The sister of the Matron of Potgietersrus Hospital is on a visit here. We have not seen her yet. Dot says it is a very nice idea of as many of the family as possible to listen to morning prayers at 10.15. She has not always finished off her work in the kitchen by then but will listen whenever possible. I must not forget my first great grandchild's second birthday on 22nd of this month. I hope to be able to look in on Grahamstown if I go to Uitenhage. In this connection, Aunt Kate Dudley has written to Grace offering them to come to Grass Ridge sometime in January which is very kind of her. It certainly helps considerably towards making plans. Norman Katkop has also written about his and Gladys' holiday to East London. From a medical point of view, it does not seem to have been much help but it is nice to know that Gladys is suffering less pain. The family all seem well and flourishing.

Joe reports on their visit to the Specialist in Port Elizabeth. He could not find anything organically wrong. He must go to him again when he has another bad attack. Joe is to have further examinations to determine if the germ is still in his system. He has given him a diet so as to put on weight as he is much underweight. Blodwen says milk, butter etc. is very expensive. Dr has given

Joe 200 pills to take. Blodwen says she is feeling better a bit. Maisie is in Dr's hand also. Twelve visitors were expected for Blodwen's birthday party. The garden is yielding a lot of vegetables and poultry are doing well.

Douglas is taking out the prickly pear from part of the farm. Ploughing still has to be done. They are all well. I have still got a letter from Mr Stock to answer.

Lots of love to each and all,

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday October 12th 1948

My dear All,

The best news is that we have had a lovely rain last evening and during the night. It has cooled the air and I am typing this at ten a.m. sitting with my cardigan on. I was up to breakfast – about seven – the last two mornings and hope to continue the same during the warmer weather. It makes the days so short if I have breakfast in bed.

We had news yesterday that Miss Hicks, a former near neighbour when Grace and family lived on the plot just outside of town, has passed away in East London. When brother Joe was out here, he and I slept at Miss Hicks' house as Grace had not room for us. She had been doing military service – driving motors etc. She was very nice and a great friend of the family.

Harold came up for the weekend. Arrived about 8.30 p.m. Saturday and left during Sunday night. He looks very well and is doing good work in Bloemfontein. He hopes to join the family at Uitenhage if we go there.

The engagement of Joy Moorcroft to a Mr Barnard of Stellenbosch was announced in the Midland News last week. She is a jolly good girl and I hope will be very happy. I have written to her.

During the hot days of last week, I enjoyed a tepid shower bath one afternoon and hope to repeat the effort when occasion is suitable.

Do any of you ever want to know the day of the week when certain events may have happened? Mr Smyter, who called to see me recently, has sent me a perpetual calendar. I have amused myself by checking the correctness of same and so far each date has been absolutely correct. For instance, October 14th 1891 was a Wednesday 57 years ago. It commences with the first century and goes on into the eternity. So if any one wants to know the day of the week of the past or future, let me know.

Today is Kingsley's birthday. I have written to him for the occasion. Douglas says he is doing very well at Stellenbosch University. He was hoping to see Gladys and others at Rondebosch during the short holidays.

I understand that arrangements have been made for Raymond to go to the Boys High School, Rondebosch next year. I think Pat Fear went there for a couple of years. Alan and Keith also went there.

Morning prayers this morning was conducted by Rev G.C. MacIaclan, formerly Baptist Minister at Cradock, now resident at Springs, a very helpful address.

In a recent letter from Douglas, he says he is finding difficulty in getting ready made clothing to fit him. Trousers are not right in the girth or length. You can judge for yourselves what is the matter! He is due in Kimberly on October 17th and 18th. They may come to see us but the date is not mentioned. He says that between the Hobsons and Butlers there have been six weddings during the past 18 months.

Ted brought home a postcard from Aunt Eliza at dinner time. She has not heard any news of Mary since she went into hospital. Hopes the rest will do her good. Freda is in Kimberley nursing Maude Millar's brother who is ill like Dudley has been.

It has turned out a very nice day after the rain. I won't add more but may do so tomorrow. It is now October 13th and I hope there will be a nice post. Yesterday I spent a good deal of time looking through old newspapers and cuttings. I came across a lot of most interesting cuttings etc. Some of these I am sending to parties who are mentioned and may be still interested. These include some to Reg and Dot, Mr Woodcock who took over the Northern News from Reg, others go to the new proprietor of the Midland News etc.

A nice letter has come from Rex reporting their safe arrival at their home after a very happy honeymoon which was spent at Rustenberg on a guest farm. They also spent a couple of days in Johannesburg and saw Trixie and family and stayed a day or two with Vivienne's brother. They have not got a wireless set yet but hope to get one soon. I am sure it will be a boon as it seems to me that their farm is rather far from everywhere. Mom and I went there once or twice and it is quite

a pretty place. I hope to see it again one of these days. They did a lot of visiting and no doubt are glad to settle down.

Later. No post delivered here today, except one postcard from Aunt Eliza, dated Monday afternoon. No news of Mary yet. She is under treatment for arthritis.

Alice Biggs and Alan are in Cradock. Alan and Ernest have gone to Port Elizabeth for a little change and were expected back on Wednesday. Letty was expected at the Poplars on Wednesday as she was so anxious to see Mary. Alison was back from Uppington. Mary was not able to write from her bed. No news from Cape. That is the purport of the news on the card from Cradock. Something has gone wrong with the typewriter.

Love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday October 18th, 1948

My dear All,

I am starting early, it is now a few minute past eight. I have had breakfast, as I have been doing for some time past with the family. I rise at 6.30. I listen in to the physical exercises, the daily health talk at one minute to seven, and news at seven. After breakfast I listen to the news from London at eight. The news is still far from being bright but it is hoped that Russia will be more reasonable and so avoid another war.

Cradock has done very well in raising over £2,400 for the poor starving children of Europe. I have not heard yet the amount Kroonstad has raised. I am sorry to say Grace has been a bit off colour lately and Dr was called in yesterday. He prescribed rest and tablets and a bottle of medicine and she seems brighter this morning. Charles was away from school most of last week, he had a temperature and his glands appeared swollen. We thought it might be mumps but he is better this morning and has gone to school. The rest of the family seem well. My blind eye leaks a good deal.

I think I must see the dentist soon as if we do go away about Xmas, I should prefer to have any extractions and replacements done before leaving. They are not troubling me at present but some I know are loose.

Ernest Saunders phoned to his home early Sunday morning to find out how May was getting on. He got through without any waiting. May expects to be out of hospital early this week. Mary was still suffering a good deal of pain and found it difficult to move, even in bed. We hope for better reports. We are hoping Florrie Biggs, who is in Cradock and is going to Pretoria soon, will call here if she is travelling by car. She has a new one. Aunt Letty is staying at the Poplars.

We are glad to hear that Douglas has had some rain – 75 points, Vryburg had nearly two inches, Arthur had 73.35 and Eric 75. Leslie Hudson had more. We have had a few showers. Evelyn thinks that baby Leslie will soon be crawling. He is still a charming child. Douglas and Evelyn are all alone now but are still looking to pay us a visit shortly. They did not forget the 14th instant. When they went to town recently, there was Evelyn, Vivienne and Rex in front and four pigs in the back. I presume they travelled in the lorry. Evelyn says her garden is lovely, her roses are a speciality. She would like to be picking flowers all day long.

Lynne writes that they have decided to build a house for themselves and hope it will be ready about April or May next. Houses are very scarce there as everywhere else.

A postcard from Mary said that Olive Collett was in St Joseph Nursing Home and had to be X-rayed. The Midgleys who called here a few weeks ago had been in Cradock and seen Mary. Una Shingler writes that they have bought a second-hand car, the first they have had for nine years. Now they will be able to take Mrs Florence about a bit. Mr Rossler (Cradock) has recently got married to Matron Laughton of Port Shepstone Hospital. They did not pass this way. I am sorry to see that Mr Redfern has resigned the headmastership of Kingswood School and is returning to England as an Inspector of Schools in Kent, Surrey and Suffolk. Mr Sam Hobson, formerly of Vryburg, is standing for the Provincial Council Election for Albany. I hope he gets in.

We had a little excitement on Thursday afternoon when a loaded lorry, driven by a native, collided with an electric light standard just at the Adams Square close to us. The wires were down and the standard pulled out of the ground and broken. My electric clock stopped at 1.45 showing exact time of the accident. No one was hurt and a new standard erected the same afternoon.

Dot says the renovations etc are greatly appreciated. The ceiling of the front stoep seems to make it much cooler. Their fish pond has been cleaned and I hope they will be careful about Joan as two children have been drowned through falling into such ponds. She complains of terrific heat and winds. They had 25 points of rain which gave some relief. Her maid has been sick which does not make matters any easier.

I attended the church quarterly meeting on Thursday evening. The first since I have been here. Yesterday was “decision day” and I had been asked to address the senior Sunday School and was glad to do so. Miss Hicks, who was a very good neighbour of Grace when at the Plot died in East London last week. My brother Joe gave her a bedside rug which ha had purchased at Tiger

Kloof when he and I slept at her house. Subsequently she gave the rug to Grace and it is now in my room here.

Barry Watts had a car lift from Rhodes to Grahamstown recently. He hiked back and had a very interesting journey – many lifts on the long journey.

Mrs Farren's daughter, who married Mr Pierce's son, is on a visit with two of her children. All the Pierce family are together for a few days.

Letter from Aunt Emmie just to hand says Dudley has to be X-rayed before the Dr will approve of his going to Kimberley on Thursday next. He is much better and has been to town once without ill effect. Joyce is not going with him and there is no mention of Ray going. Letter from Joe also this a.m. says they leave for Kendrew on the evening of 19th December. I see we could arrive in Uitenhage on the afternoon of 19th if our plans mature.

Love to all,

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday October 25th, 1948

My dear All,

It is just 10.30 and morning prayers have just been conducted. I hope that any of you – especially the women folk who may be at home, will make time for these services. They begin at 10.15 and always conclude at 10.30. I always try to arrange my work so as to listen in. I would like to feel that as many of the family are also listening at the same time. It conduces to that feeling of unity and oneness which is so helpful. I also suggest that we should all listen in on Sunday mornings at 10 minutes past eight to 8.30 for the service entitled Awake my Soul. Both of these services are broadcast from Johannesburg and are conducted by ministers of different denominations.

I have been well off for letters during the past week for which many thanks. Please deny yourselves a little time for writing. I live for letters – even a postcard is cheering if you have not time for a full letter. I hope you did not forget to write to Ruth for her anniversary on 20th.

Blodwen wrote telling of the return of Joe's complaint and wanting Douglas to take him to consult a specialist in Johannesburg. We have not heard if this can be arranged. Blodwen herself is far from well. I do hope the anticipated change at Xmas time will do all a lot of good. Olive has been in St Joseph's Nursing Home in Port Elizabeth but is back at Walmer. I had asked if there was any possibility of my getting a shake down there whilst Grace and Co are at Uitenhage but there is no chance. Perhaps Joy may be able to find somewhere nearby where I could sleep or a café where we could get our meals.

David has been accepted by Conference as a candidate for the ministry and is thus entitled to the title of Reverend. Of course he will have some years of study before he is Ordained as a fully fledged minister. I hope I may be spared to attend such a service.

On Thursday afternoon, Grace, Ted and I went with Mr and Mrs Howard to the Garden Party given at the River to the Governor General and Mrs van Zyl. It was quite an informal affair, no speeches but after tea they walked about greeting the guests at the various tables and saying a few words to each. They went round separately. I was interested in meeting them as during my term of office at the YMCA, he was President of the local association. I took with me my scrap album of photos when Mrs van Zyl was present at the re-opening of the Long Street premises. Mrs van Zyl and Mom were standing next to each other and the Earl of Clarendon and others were there. Mrs van Zyl was very interested and recognised me. She thanked me for the Christmas cards I have sent to them for several years past. She thought the words were lovely and she said she had often quoted from them in addresses she had been called upon to make from time to time. The same evening, Ted drew my attention that Cradock was on the air. Of course we listened but I am sorry to say the reception was so very bad that we could not catch what was being said. We did however recognise Aunt Eliza's voice and her merry laughter. Mr Lidbetter's voice I also recognised but could not make out what he was saying. I have written to the Broadcasting House at Johannesburg asking if it could not be repeated. On Saturday evening we had a postcard from Dot saying they heard it all very distinctly. Even Joan recognised Eliza's voice and wanted to now why she did not speak more. I am sure Eliza must have been thrilled at the experience.

I generally keep a slab of chocolate in one of my drawers but noticed it had been nibbled recently. I got a couple of little nipper traps and the first night I caught a large mouse and the next night two baby ones in the one trap. I hope there are no more. Grace has two cats and they sometimes catch some in the pantry. I am using new carbon now and I hope you are able to read my typing better. The Howards have bought a new motor and after the Garden Party on Thursday they took us for a spin. Very kind of them.

I hope to get my teeth seen to this week. They are not aching but I find I cannot masticate my food. I guess he will take out the remaining five or six I still have which will mean making a new plate. I had better have it seen to before the holidays.

I don't think I have anything more to add this week except lots of love to each and all.

3.p.m. A postcard in Mary's handwriting says she is slightly better in some respects. Thinks the injections may stop tomorrow. She says it may be that she has had a touch of erysipelas on the right side of her head. She has treated all her friends very badly (I am sure she has not meant to).

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday November 1st 1948

My dear All,

I have just finished a short letter to Blodwen for her birthday on Thursday and am doubtful if I shall be able to finish my weekly epistle in time for post this afternoon but I will try. I expect Joe and Blodwen are in Port Elizabeth today consulting the specialist about the return of Joe's complaint. The last we heard was that he was much better and would rather have seen the specialist when he was feeling so bad. I hope we shall soon hear that the Dr has got a solution to the trouble.

Last week I summoned up sufficient courage to visit the Dentist. He injected some stuff into my gums and after some minutes for it to take effect, the effect being that it made my bottom lip swell considerably, he extracted two teeth, both of which gave me considerable pain. He had intended removing three but put off the others for another visit. There are four more and a stump still to come out. After that there will be a new plate, unless he can add to the present one. I shall be glad when it is over. Ted borrowed Ernest Saunders' car and motored Grace and me down and waited for me and took me home for a rest. I must admit that I am a coward when teeth are concerned. I must be thankful that my teeth have lasted so well all these years. The Saunders have moved to the house at their bakery. Doris has gone to Uitenhage to be with her sister who has recently had a serious operation and now a wire has come saying her mother is ill at East London so we suppose she will go there before she comes back.

This morning, shortly after six, Charles and Neville were interested in watching the partial eclipse of the sun. Fortunately I had kept the smoked glasses I used when we saw the total eclipse on October 1st 1940 in Cradock. The boys had not seen an eclipse before.

Ruth had a very happy birthday last month. They are leaving on December 15th for their holiday. The address will be P.O. Kasouga, Grahamstown to January 15th. I have written to Mr Lute where we stayed ten years ago near East London to see if he has any of the cottages we occupied then available. Grace is anxious for Jean to have as much of the sea as possible.

My watch had a couple of falls some time ago so I sent it to the Swiss Jeweller in Cradock and after keeping it for more than a month – I think it was nearly two months – it has now come back. I hope he had made a good job of it.

Dot says she has been busy making her Xmas cakes. They all hope to go to Pretoria and Johannesburg to see the English Cricketers during the holidays. They do not look to go away for any length of time. Her servant girl left last month but she has got a new one but Joan does not take any notice of her yet. Grace has made a change with both her helps. They come and go without any notice but fortunately she has managed to get a new maid and garden boy this morning. The new girl is not sleeping in but the boy will.

Beryl heard Aunt Eliza on the wireless last week. Unfortunately Joe was not listening in. I have not had any reply from the Broadcasting office about repeating the talk again. Joe has been selling his three month old cockerels for 3/- each. He has quite a lot of poultry now. He says the weeds are growing tremendously. The insects here at night time are eating the young vine shoots. Ted puts a lantern in a basin of water, with a little paraffin in, and that kills hundreds of them but does not seem to make much difference.

White bread came into use after ten years absence today. I am quite content with the brown which I think is more wholesome for me. Ernest Saunders' baker had the misfortune to get his hand into a machine recently and cut his hand badly. Clifford has finished his sorting wool at Fort Beaufort. Eleven shearers did 42 sheep in one day and Clifford sorted the lot in the one day hour. Quick work.

There is not time to add more. We had some nice showers this afternoon. The wireless is very noisy but I have tried to get the cricket score.

Lots of love to all. No news of Mary
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday November 15th, 1948

My dear All,

There is much to report this week. The headlines might briefly be stated thus. Douglas and Evelyn arrived here Saturday morning. I was in the Dentist's hands on Friday and had a bad time. Jean goes to Bethlehem for her music exam today. Joe spent last weekend in Cradock. From Cape Town we hear he has suggested taking me to see Aunt Emmie after visiting Uitenhage. My overseas Xmas cards have been posted etc.

I have not had any direct news from Cradock of Joe's visit but no doubt it will come in due course. Aunt Eliza writes more or less regularly once a week and no doubt Joe will have written over the weekend. I have had it in my mind that I should like to go to Cape Town but had not mentioned it as I anticipated that Joe would not be likely to entertain the idea as he would be having his holiday at Xmas time and would not have reserve leave on hand. I shall be pleased if the trip does materialise. I have also planned in my mind to visit Grahamstown and of course Cradock and Fish River on the return journey and also, if possible, to look in at Queenstown. I have ascertained from the South African Railways that tourist tickets (available for six months) are available but I am not planning for such an extended holiday. I don't suppose I should spend more than a few days or possibly a week at Cape Town. I do not know if I have told you that Aunt Emmie' is acting under doctor's orders by staying in bed every day until three pm in order to rest as much as possible. It is three or more years since we last met.

No news has come regarding Mary's condition during the week but a note from Florrie, who has been baby worshipping in Pretoria and will be returning shortly to Cradock to pick up her Mother and take her back to Graaff Reinet, gives the impression that Mary is making good progress. I hope it is so. I wrote to her for her birthday. We have asked her to call here but she says she is in a hurry.

I must make a break here to say that we heard at quarter to seven this morning of the safe arrival of a son to Princess Elizabeth. God bless him.

On Friday morning Grace and I went to the dentist. He removed one stump after injecting my gums. It came out quite easily but when he attempted the second stump, after more injections, he could not manage to get it out. I fear I screamed with pain. He had two or three tries to get it out and gave it up. He hinted that I might have to go to hospital and have it extracted there. I suspect that means gas or something of the sort. I did not faint but they gave me Salvolaty and smelling salts but I felt very miserable and don't look forward to further treatment. I enquired as to when I could expect to have a new plate. I would not like to go away with my mouth in its present condition. He thinks the gums will sufficiently shrunk by the end of the month and it need only be a few days to fix up the plate. We got back from the dentist and about 12.30, when Ted phoned to say Douglas had wired enquiring if it would be convenient for he and Evelyn to come on Saturday morning. Ted wired at once but they did not get the telegram but came all the same. They slept at Wolmaransstad and got here at 10.30. I am very glad to see them. Douglas has an appointment in Johannesburg this morning so he left last night by train and may be back this evening or tomorrow. Am glad to say they had a comfortable journey across and left all well. Their telephone is out of order which accounts for their not getting the wire. He motored some of us to church in the morning and in the afternoon took us for a spin about the town and river. Grace and I did not go out in the evening as it had turned rather cold. The others went by car with Douglas and Evelyn. On three successive mornings last week I got up early to see the new comet but without success but this morning, Charles and Neville saw it but it being viable only just before sunrise, it was not too clear. Neville asked me if the arrival of the comet meant that there was going to be war? I certainly hope there will not be another war.

I have stopped several times whilst typing this to listen to accounts in London of the significance of the Royal birth. It has been very interesting.

I am sorry to say that Grace has not been up to concert pitch for some little while and needs more rest. I understand that her digestion is the seat of the trouble. She is not laid up. Ted too has not good health as he should have. Often he has to put in twelve hours per day which is too much.

I hope the forthcoming holiday will do them both a lot of good. We shall have to make our plans more definite. It is probable at least two bicycles will be taken to Uitenhage. David will most likely cycle direct from Grahamstown.

Lynne writes that she is anxious to get on with the building of their house. They have not been able to find a suitable plot and of course material is very scarce.

Dudley Townshend is due back in Cape Town this week. He is at present at Eric's.

The Order of Merit that was awarded me by the Boy Scout Association last year and the certificate of same reached me last February, the medal has now come to hand. I was going to attempt another sheet but will not do so now.

Much love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Wednesday November 17th, 1948

My dear All,

I feel that I must write another letter as since my effort of Monday 15th, fresh developments have happened. Douglas, as you know, left on Sunday night for Johannesburg on business and returned on Monday, arriving during the night (without disturbing anyone except Evelyn). He has been trying to buy a second-hand boiler for the Cooperative dairy his company has bought in Kimberley. The sort he wants are not available since the war and he thinks he has been successful. He has also tried all the engineering firms here but without success.

On Monday evening, Ernest Saunders motored us, and some walked, to the river to see the illuminations. The Free State Conferences of Municipalities are holding their meeting here this week and of course the Town is putting on its best appearance. The effect was certainly very pretty. The willows and poplars all in full leaf and the lawns right down to the waters edge illuminated by thousands of electric lights gave a most pleasing effect. I hope the delegates will be favourably impressed.

On Tuesday I received letters from Aunt Eliza, Joe and Aunt Emmie. Joe and Blodwen's letters were delayed two days by having been delivered to the wrong Butler although properly addressed to Reitz Street. Neither Eliza or Joe referred to my going to Cape Town to which Emmie had quoted from extracts from Eliza's letter to her about the suggestion. I have refrained from mentioning the matter because of the uncertainty of our plans materialising. I am still in the hands of the dentist and doctor. My gums are healing slowly and Grace has asked the dentist – who are both in the same building – as to what is the best to be done. Time is getting short. In just about a month from now we should be on the way to Uitenhage. The stump is still in and it seems as though my gums take a while to heal and it will be some time before an impression could be taken of the mouth for the necessary plate. This may take a good deal of time but I have no wish to go away without teeth in my head. So for the present it seems that we must wait and see.

Yesterday (Tuesday afternoon) Douglas took us to Groblers Dam and we all enjoyed the trip. There was not a great deal of water going over the weir but the scenery was very pretty. Evelyn wished she had her camera so that she could have taken snaps of the river with its wonderful reflections of trees overhanging and the stillness of the water. Those who have better eyes than I have were interested in watching the fish (barbell) swimming. They were quite big ones. On our way back we called on the Howards. Douglas had met them on his previous visit and they were pleased to meet Evelyn. They have a nice garden but not much water. We offered to take Ernest and Doris Saunders but she was not feeling well. It appears that whilst at East London, an insect or something bit her cheek and it has become inflamed. The Dr has applied some ointment.

Since I started this letter, post has brought letters, quite a good batch. Emmie enclosed letters from Joe and Blodwen which had reached her from Eliza. No mention in either of these refer to my going to Cape Town. He had enjoyed his visit to Cradock and got back in time for work. Blodwen had a very happy birthday, lots of flowers, visitors and presents. In the evening, a singsong etc. Emmie writes that she is carrying out her Dr's orders by resting the whole day instead of just to three p.m. This of course is somewhat irksome but is for her good. Dudley is expected back today and we all hope he is much better in health.

Douglas and Evelyn left here at 8.30 this morning. I hope they have a comfortable journey home but it is much hotter today than it has been. They had good rains just before they started for here. A letter from Arthur's wife this a.m. says they too have had beautiful rains all round the farms. She has sent me a nice photo of her baby Leslie. He is a fine chap at seven months old.

I hear from Rockcliff, where we stayed some years ago, that the cottages have changed hands and the cottages are booked up to the end of February.

Dot writes that they are taking orders for cakes – for church funds – 5/- lb for fruitcake including un-iced 3/- per lb. She hopes to get a lot of orders. She is also making white bread for toast. Their electric light has given lots of trouble lately so she has been cooking Xmas puddings etc for the Watts next door. Dot hopes to get an electric stove when the new power station is in

working order. They too have had good rains, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches, last week. Norman will be going through here on Monday night. Shall not get up at that time.

Mary is able to stand a little but not allowed to walk. Aunt Eliza has had her kitchen thoroughly cleaned out, much to her satisfaction. Trevor has won a quiz competition, great excitement. I am glad to hear that Billy Moorcroft has got over the stabbing affair so well. Had a long letter from Joy Moorcroft. I must answer it soon. Grace has got in touch with Dr and I am to go on Friday and he and the Dentist will see what is best to be done. Will let you know as soon as possible.

Love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday November 22nd, 1948

My dear All,

Douglas and Evelyn got back safely and quickly after their weekend visit to us on Tuesday afternoon. We had a wire to that effect and since then I think Douglas has phoned twice. Am glad to say the farm had some rain whilst they were away.

We have also heard from Joe and Blodwen. Joe says he thinks he will be able to manage a trip to Cape Town after his holiday to Kendrew, that is after January 3rd. I have suggested that, if convenient to him, we go the weekend January 8th returning to Uitenhage January 16th. In that case our itinerary would work out thus: Grace, Ted, Jean, Charles and I would leave here by train Saturday 6.5 p.m. passing Cradock Sunday 8.30 a.m. and arriving Port Elizabeth 3 p.m., and Uitenhage about 5 p.m. Harold will probably join the same train at Bloemfontein. David is proposing to bike from Grahamstown about the same time. Joe and family are booked to leave Uitenhage, the same evening as we arrive, for Kendrew and return early on Monday January 3rd. Grace, Ted and Co would leave the same evening for Fish River. I have promised to stay in Uitenhage a week longer and at the end of that week, if he and I go to Cape Town, it would work in very nicely. Ruth and family are due back in Grahamstown on January 15th and if it should be convenient to them to have me for a day or so, I could see them all and the two great grandchildren. Then I could go on to Cradock and if convenient to Aunt Eliza to have me to sleep, I could get my meals out. Nothing definite is arranged as to what date we should arrive back in Kroonstad. Schools re-open about the end of January. Whilst at Cradock, I might manage a quick trip across by car to Lynne and Jerry. I am going to ask Clifford if he could spare a few hours for the trip.

Blodwen has arranged with her next door neighbour to let me have a bedroom whilst in Uitenhage which no doubt would be a great convenience.

We have consulted Doctor about the removing the two stumps and he has talked the matter over with the Dentist and they both agree that it may be best to leave the stumps where they are for the present. I am to see the dentist again this week.

Baby Leslie has been vaccinated, I hope with satisfactory results. Arthur and Rex were busy ploughing at Grass Ridge.

Exams start tomorrow, here and Stellenbosch. It is always a very trying time for students, especially if they are at all nervous and most are.

I have been looking at Lynne's plan of the house they want to build in Queenstown and have ventured to make some suggestions. They have not secured a plot of ground yet.

Blodwen has a job at the Library some evenings a week. She likes the work. She is also doing some writing for the local paper and it all helps.

I do not feel that I can write much today. I have done two long letters and the tip of my first finger on the right hand has been getting sore for some days with all the tapping the keys of the typewriter.

Dudley is, I expect, back by now. The derailment of a train a few miles from Vryburg last Monday upset his plans. There was a truck of dynamite included in the derailment but fortunately it did not explode.

Mary, we hear is able to stand a little and is making some progress. I do not expect Aunt Letty is still in Cradock. Florrie did not call here.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday November 30th, 1948

My dear All,

I seem to spend most of my time in writing letters, sometimes as many as eight or more a day – apart from the seven copies I do in one typing. There is not much else that I can do now and it is a real pleasure to do what I can. It also affords me pleasure to receive letters and I wish to thank all my family and friends for their frequent contributions. Please keep up the good work, and I will try to keep up my share.

You will be glad to know that I have at last got my new bottom plate in my mouth. Now I have to learn how to eat and I find it very difficult and also painful operation. I cannot bite yet but manage to soak my food. Grace is very good in supplying custards, jellies etc. We get white bread but I cannot manage any crusts. As a rule I prefer the ordinary brown bread, meat I cannot masticate but fish is easier. Green mealies we have had but they are not in my line. Rice has become available just recently and is easily digested. Thick milk – with a little sugar – is acceptable. In the course of time – probably some weeks ahead – I may be able to eat anything that is set before me but at present it is positively difficult to eat anything. The Dentist says I must have patience and learn how to eat. He is against easing the plate very much as my gums will be sure to shrink a great deal more and then the plate would be too loose.

Our seats have been booked for Saturday 18th and I hope to see some friends at Cradock Station for a few minutes on Sunday morning 19th about 8 a.m. I shall not get off the train until we reach Port Elizabeth at 3 p.m. I am taking my ticket right through to Cape Town but do not expect to stay there more than a few days. Joe says he thinks he will be able to arrange to get a few more days leave. Grace and family will return to Fish River after Joe and Co return to Uitenhage about January 3rd. If plans should be altered, will let you know in good time.

The house girl is leaving today – without giving a month's notice, as seems the usual habit in these parts. Her husband has come to fetch her. The wash girl is a day late in coming this week but is here today. The garden boy is still here. Blodwen is arranging for her wash girl to give Grace a hand. Grace has not been up to the mark and Dr has prescribed some terrible medicine for her. She is better today. Pam was off sick yesterday. I do hope the change is going to do us all a lot of good. Ted too is not as bright as sometimes. Whilst at the Dentist's last week, I took the opportunity of going over the new building of the Land Bank where Pam is one of the staff of typists. It is a very fine building, two stories and built in brick and cement. The foundations in some parts are thirty feet deep. The offices are large and air conditioned and no expense has been spared to make it convenient in every way. There is plenty of room for extensions in the number of staff accommodated. Pam is one of five typists.

The subject of Christmas presents has been mentioned and it has been decided, so far as this household is concerned, that in consideration of the times and expensive holiday in the near future, they be omitted this year. Christmas cards will be sent as usual. Mine are already for posting in a few days time.

Last Saturday I had the opportunity of attending a Sons of England meeting. About twenty members from Bloemfontein came up for the occasion. It was the first such gathering I have been able to attend for some years and I quite enjoyed it. Talking of Christmas cards, I have received one already. As usual it was from Cyril Brown, he is always the first to come to hand.

The grass in front of the house is coming on nicely. Grace planted an acorn recently and same is showing up nicely.

Lynne has sent me a sketch plan of the house they hope to build but they have not got the necessary plot on which to build. I have ventured to suggest some improvements to the plan. Lynne does not expect to go home for Xmas this year. Dot is expecting Donald Hudson and wife and two children to visit them from December 1st to 15th. He was stationed in that area during the war. Norman is home but we did not see him as he passed through at night. Dot is busy getting ready for Xmas Sunday School entertainment etc.

Amongst old records I have recently destroyed was one showing that during our residence at 34 Dundas Street from January 1st 1938 to May 3rd 1947, we caught 35 mice and 18 rats. We lived at 34 Dundas from January 1st 1938 to May 3rd 1948 when the house was sold.

What a terrible catastrophe happened at Roodepoort. It is estimated that one million pounds worth of damage was done and only three people lost their lives. What a wonderful response has been made to the call for help.

Jean has been busy with her exams and still has three more sittings. I think she has a good chance of passing.

I must close now with fond love to all the circle and hope you all keep well.

Dad

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Tuesday December 7th, 1948

My dear All,

I was not able to get down to doing much in the way of typing yesterday. I had, including newspapers and letters, over a dozen all told. I did appreciate being remembered in this way. I am sure I do not deserve so much but there seems little that I can do in these days except write and that I cannot do properly. However please accept my poor attempts.

Lynne recently sent the plan of the home she wants to build and I ventured to make some suggested improvements and she thinks well of most of them. Douglas writes that Emily has a brother getting married in January and Arthur is after a lorry there so some of them may be going down. I do not know if I shall be able to work it into my plans.

Jean has finished all her examination papers and we shall be anxious to hear if she has passed. The thinks she has.

Douglas says Roy has passed some exam on the Railway and if there is a vacancy, he may start work as an apprentice carpenter on January 4th. He is only 15½. I did not know he was so far advanced.

Dot has her boys home. I expect they are in Pretoria today watching the English cricketers. I pity them if it is as hot there today as it is here. Yesterday it was 100 in the shade in Bloemfontein and quite as hot here I am sure. I fear it will be hot in the train going down. I have got my seat booked and so has Grace and family. Harold will join the same train at Bloemfontein. David looks to go to Uitenhage on his bicycle from Grahamstown. They are all well there and expect to be back about January 15th.

Yesterday I posted 484 Christmas cards for the Union. The overseas ones I posted in November. I have received a few already. Clifford has engaged himself to Mr Gibbons near Rooispruit until April but will go home for weekends occasionally.

I am sorry to say that Aunt Emmie, who spent last weekend at Gladys', had an attack of shingles, a very irritating complaint which generally affects the ribs and the heart. Her doctor went to see her and I hope we shall soon hear that she is better. She went back to Mowbray on Saturday evening. Dudley too is still having trouble with his feet.

What a gloom has been cast over the country, with the devastating tornado at Roodepoort, where the damage is estimated at one million pounds, then the sudden death of Mr van der Bijl and followed two days after by the death of Mr J.H. Hofmeyer whom I knew so well in connection with YMCA work at Cape Town. I have written to his Mother who was 86 the day of his funeral.

Aunt Eliza writes that she and I, both useless bodies, still hang on and no good to anyone. It has been trying to rain this afternoon but no success. Aunt Eliza says that it has been cold in Craddock, she does so enjoy the bright sunshine.

Am sorry not to be able to write more except to say that Mary is making some progress. Aunt Letty has evidently gone back to Graff Reinet.

Charles

47 Reitz Street, Kroonstad
Monday 13th December 1948

My dear All,

It is not quite seven and I want to make an early start as there will be lots to do in the way of packing etc for our start on holiday on Saturday. I find I cannot work or think as quickly as in the past so must start early to get things done.

The past week has been a very trying one so far as the weather is concerned. We have experienced a regular heat-wave which seems to have been felt all over the Union. In Bloemfontein it has been over 100 in the shade, Upington I think was 110. Cradock does not publish the weather conditions as it used to do. Some evenings it has been so hot that I have been glad to have the electric fan switched on when I go to bed. We have had a few showers but nothing to register. I wonder if Reg is keeping up the record at Potgietersrus. I gave him the thermometer that I had in Cradock. On Friday afternoon the Sons of England entertained the children of members at the river. I asked one of the Indian waiters at the pavilion if they had a thermometer so that I could see how hot it was. His reply was "No Sir, but we have some cool drinks." There were between 30 and 40 children and didn't they put away the drinks. I took Charles and Neville as visitors and all had a good time. Ice-creams, fruit salads, cakes and as many drinks out of bottles as they wanted. We had arranged for the rest of the family to come down to the river and we had our supper there under the trees. It was beautifully cool by then. Ted brought a folding chair for my comfort and we walked home about 8 p.m.

On Saturday there was a gliding and aeroplane demonstration from the aerodrome. The boys were there in the morning and afternoon in the broiling sun. Ernest Saunders kindly lent us his car to go and see some of the stunts but something went wrong with the works of the car and we did not get further than the first block of buildings and returned home but we did see some of the planes flying about but not any of the gliders their being too far away.

The Howard family came in after service last evening and enjoyed cool drinks on the stoep. They are all leaving at three a.m. Wednesday for their holiday at East London. Jean Howard has passed her J.C. exam. Our Jean won't hear the result of her exam – matric – until about the middle of January.

Christmas cards are beginning to come in. Miss Pavit, Librarian at Vryburg writes that she was assaulted by a native whilst sleeping on her stoep and was badly knocked about. Madge Masson – now Mrs Hearn – who was a very great friend of us all in Vryburg, writes that she has only one child still at school. I think there was only one day difference in the ages of Harold and Madge. I had not heard from her for some years. Mrs Legg is at Potgietersrus. She had a lift by car from Bulawayo and greatly enjoyed the trip.

Reg and Dot have been to Pretoria and met Norman and Alan, all well. They have had the drilling machine on their farm and struck water at 95 feet and continued to 170 with a yield of 600 gallons per hour. The soil is soft yellow pot clay so they will have to put casing down. Stanley Gilbert has bought a new £800 car. Auctioneering evidently pays good dividends!

I hope Frank Short is well over his "op" and that the appendix will not give him any further trouble. I forgot to mention that at the school distribution of prizes, Jean was awarded a bursary of £8 as well as a number of prizes. As the head girl of the school, she presented the Mayoress with a beautiful bouquet after presenting the prizes. Subsequently the Mayoress gave me a nice rosebud but it broke in getting it out.

I am looking forward to my visit and hope you are not expecting to find an old decrepit old white headed man who is not capable of doing anything for himself. I am still young in thought if old in some ways. I hope to find all in good health and spirit and hope the weather will be kind to us. We have our tickets and insurance ticket.

Since typing the above, the postman has just delivered 25 letters and cards which are very interesting. Many express appreciation of same. News from Aunt Eliza says that Mary was leaving the hospital on Saturday and would be staying at the Poplars. If I were in Cradock, I would have offered her a home. Am glad she is so much better and hope she continues to make satisfactory progress.

I notice an announcement in the Midland that Dr Scholtz is to be married in Tarkastad on Wednesday. I must send him a wire. Nice letter from Rev Ludlow. He is being transferred to Aliwal North from January. All letters refer to the excessive heat and drought. Evelyn writes that they have been to Kimberley for some meetings and shopping. All were well. I guess they will have a full house for Xmas and I hope all will be well.

This, I suppose, will be my last letter from this address. Of course I am taking the typewriter with me. Address up to January 6th: 23 Luyt Street Uitenhage. Will advise you after that. I expect to go to Cape Town with Joe on January 8th to 15th. Ruth has asked me to go to her after January 15th. I hope to write again before Xmas but in case I should forget (which is not likely) I do wish all of you a very happy time. This will be my second Christmas without dear Mom.

Pam will be sleeping at the Saunders and will come along to see that everything is in order here. Must stop now, with very dear love to all and best wishes to each and all,

Yours affectionately,

Dad

23 Luyt Street, Uitenhage
December 26th, 1948

My dear All,

This is Grace at the typewriter again and of course, the news is not too cheerful. We arrived safely here last Sunday evening, train a bit late, but we were able to see Joe and family before they left. Monday morning we hopefully looked for the wash-girl that was supposed to come and help us but up to now, she has not come. We had to find our way about to shops etc and the children all gave a hand with dish washing, bed-making, cooking and sweeping, not to mention feeding fowls and watering the garden.

First of all on Monday night he developed a gum boil or something and his cheek got quite swollen up by Tuesday. He also could not get his bowels to move, so I gave him medicine to correct that, and then Tuesday night he kept us on the hop all night. Wednesday morning I called in Dr Ruth Hull, because he was complaining that he could not pass water. She prescribed certain medicines which did not help so she had to drain the water that evening. Then Thursday, things became a bit more complicated with a tendency to reach. Friday and Saturday afternoons, the District Nurse came in to give him an enema, with no result in both cases. So today, Dr Hull said he would have to go to Hospital. She had put his name down for a private ward after her first visit and did not want him to go into a General Ward on Christmas Day, as she knew it would be very noisy and distracting. He has got a corner bed, in a ward of eight beds, two of which are unoccupied. The Xmas decorations are still up and the place looks very cheery.

And so I will have to break off until later. Visiting hours are 3 to 4 pm, and 6.30 to 7 pm.

Monday morning. When we went along to the Hospital at 6 pm last evening, Dad was sleeping but woke before we left. He was more comfortable but the enema had again brought no result. About 9 pm Dr Hull rang and said she had just come from the hospital and said there was no need for alarm. She had phoned through to Joe and told him it was not necessary for him to come, and promised to let him know if he was needed. She was quite reassuring. This morning I have rung the ward and the Sister went to ask Dad if there was anything he wanted and came back with a long message to the effect that Rev Weavers and a lady had visited him about 10 p.m. and had brought him some flowers, and would one of the grandsons come up and take a snap of him.

Unfortunately the holidays have interfered with Postal arrangements and it would appear that it will not be any use posting this until tomorrow afternoon, so I will break off again.

Monday evening. We visited the hospital this afternoon and evening, and find Dad much the same as he was here, only more comfortable with an air cushion, lots of pillows and all the rest of the necessary nursing equipment, plus three very attentive nurses. One of them has promised to lend him her bedside wireless so he will be properly set up.

Dr Hull came along here after visiting him this morning, and reported. She said she had not been able to find the reason for the obstruction, and advised an X-ray examination tomorrow. She found the prostate gland very much enlarged but thought there was no immediate danger. So we are wiring Douglas and Dot tomorrow to that effect and hope they will not be alarmed. Ted and I are going off with the Children to Port Elizabeth after hospital and will be back here by 3 p.m. for visiting time at the hospital and will probably get the report on the X-ray in the evening. So far we have been nowhere except to Uncle Owen's. The latter came to visit Dad last evening and Beryl, Olive and Hilda came this afternoon.

Well that is all for this time and I am now going to post this in the pillar-box in the hope that it will be cleared at 6 a.m. as labelled on the pillar-box. There is nothing to be gained by waiting longer. I will try to keep you informed. Dad realises that the possibility of his trip to Cape Town and other places is very remote.

Yours with love,
Grace

23 Luyt Street, Uitenhage
30th December 1948

My dear all,

I feel I must get a letter off without delay to tell what has been happening here the last couple of days but must frankly admit that I am just about worn out. Ted isn't well and has not been at all cheerful and with all the other difficulties to contend with, I am certainly feeling the strain and will be glad of a good rest sometime.

Dr was expecting the X-ray examination to take place on Tuesday so we all went to Humewood with our lunch and the young people loved the sea bathing – not their first at Humewood – but our first outing together. Ted and I caught the 2.20 train back in order to hear the result of the X-ray only to be told it could not take place until Friday. We found Dad very uncomfortable and distressed and later that evening Dr relieved him of 3 pints of water, which gave him wonderful relief and he slept well that night. Thursday afternoon he was fairly bright but tired and uncomfortable again by evening. Then today – sorry, I made a mistake in the previous line, it was Wednesday afternoon. Then today, the X-ray was taken instead of Friday which meant that he was not allowed anything to eat until the X-ray had been taken and then he was there for almost two hours and came out feeling very weak and tearful. Anyway he then had a cup of hot milk with a biscuit and was quite cheerful when we visited him this evening. The findings of the X-ray is as follows: a looped colon, which was the reason why no enemas had been successful and was immediately rectified by the use of an extra nozzle – you trained nurses please excuse any misinterpretations of the Dr's verbal report – the enlarged prostate gland, which we knew about, and gallstones. So now the Dr says he must be most careful of his diet, taking lots of liquid paraffin and she will see if she can do or give something to relieve the bladder trouble and thinks he will be fairly well shortly.

I went to see Pixie Butler, sister to Doris Saunders after the Hospital and what a long walk that was. She is now Mrs Mascrae, a fully trained nurse, and has a nice flat, or semi-detached house really, in Cannon Street, 104B, no family and I asked her if she would consider taking Dad in when he was fit to leave the Hospital and she said she would talk things over with her husband and let me know. I told her Dad would expect to pay for accommodation etc. so we will hope to hear favourably from her shortly. Dad says he does not want to stay at the Hospital any longer than is necessary, not that it is an expensive place, or that he is dissatisfied with the attention in any way but of course it is noisy and he doesn't like the idea of being there. We all realise that Blodwen in her present state of health could not do any nursing and so I thought this would be the best suggestion under the circumstances and only hope that Pixie will be able to do this for us.

Joe and Denis phoned last night. Joe says he can take Dad up country when he is ready to travel, so he need not feel he has to hurry with his convalescence. Denis said he and Dee had had to cut short their visit to Kasougha because Tony had an upset tummy.

So far we have to acknowledge wires from Aunt Emmie and Douglas, for which many thanks.

Our plans are somewhat uncertain, or perhaps I should say mine are. Harold is booked to leave on Sunday night, Ted and Jean and Charles will go to Fish River, leaving here Monday night, and David will be on the same train going straight through to Kroonstad. It may be necessary for me to stay longer here but I can assure you I shall get away as soon as I can, and hope to rest well at Grass Ridge.

I think that is as full a report as I can give at the moment, but I must just say, in closing, that Dad was very much easier and brighter and more hopeful this evening than he has been for a long time. He says at 85 years, there are still new things to experience. He was dreading the X-ray affair after the unfortunate experience Mom had in Cradock.

I hope he continues to make satisfactory progress.

Yours with love,

Grace