

34 Dundas Street, Box 141, Cradock
Wednesday January 1st, 1941

My dear All,

My first wish to you all is that peace may be restored to this troubled world during this year and may it be soon.

Last night when I went to bed I did not think I should be able to write today as I have been in dry dock again since Joe and family left. I think I told you last week that I lost my voice after Xmas Day and the cold then seemed to settle in my head and throat. Mary advised having the doctor and he examined me on Sunday and could not find anything radically wrong, I am glad to say. He ordered me to bed for a few days and I have not been out of the house since then. I am glad to say I am feeling much better this morning and hope there will not be any setbacks again. We expected Ina on Saturday but she only turned up on Tuesday. The message she sent by her husband never reached us. We are glad to have her and hope the scheme will work satisfactorily. We must wait and see. We shifted the big cupboard in which I had my old photographs etc. out of her room on to the back stoep, where I had the bed and put that in her room. The couch we have put in the spare room. I suppose I should not have given a hand in the shifting of these more or less heavy things as the after effects may have caused my setback. We had to let the maid who was substituting for the former girl who had to leave on account of the arrival of a baby go as she was more worry than help. Mary has put on the track of getting Mrs Curson's girl as Mrs Curson is leaving for Johannesburg. She has agreed to come in a fortnight's time and has sent a substitute to do the work until she can come. So we have another to train. Oh the pleasure? of having servants!

Joe and family left on Thursday night. Rev Weavers happened to drop in just as we had finished our supper and as his wife is away, we asked him to eat with us. He was pleased to do so. He kindly offered to take Joe and Co over to the station in his car as it was not considered wise for me to venture out at ten p.m. We are glad to know they had a very comfortable journey home and found everything in order. They are now enjoying a week on a farm in the Bethlehem district about 150 miles east of Bloemfontein. I think they are due back at the end of this week. It was very nice having them and the arrangements for their sleeping and having their breakfast and dinner at Mrs Derecourt's worked very well. We went over to them for dinner each day which saved a great deal of washing up etc. Mrs Derecourt provided most lavishly.

We have been glad to hear how Xmas was spent at Kroonstad. Reg and the boys arrived there on Sunday afternoon after having been held up by a full river for an hour or so. Ted has written telling of how they enjoyed themselves with boating on the river and picnics. Am glad to hear that the two girls are having a good time in Cape Town. Had a note from Pam today. The two boys have gone to Ted's parents and a brother's for the holidays. Grace has also gone back with Reg and Dot to Potgietersrus until about 16th January. Of course she has taken Baby Charles with her. Ted is alone with the animals on the plot. We have not yet heard how Douglas and family spent the holidays but no doubt shall do so soon. He wrote to say they had had a most acceptable Xmas present in the shape of a good soaking rain just before Xmas. Ruth and family were going to Mr Mackenzie's son's farm for a few days. Denis is back from training camp for the time being. Aunt Eliza came down on New Year's Eve with Mr Thomas and sat for some time in my bedroom. She is keeping very well apparently.

Reg writes that he has leased his bio for twelve months and may pay us a visit in February. We hope it materialises. Douglas we are expecting after the 14th. I have given up the idea of going to Port Elizabeth for Friends M.M. It is not worth it just for two days and Mary does not think I am well enough. We hope Evelyn and some of the children will come with Douglas. Aunt Eliza suggest that I should go and spend some time with Aunt Emmie at Cape Town. Joyce will be returning sometime in this month. They have had a nice holiday at Gordons Bay. Muriel and her children have been down too.

I must not attempt another sheet as I have to rest a good deal each day but I am thankful still to be able to write and so keep in touch with you all. Thanks very much for all the good wishes you have sent us. Love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Box 141 Cradock
Wednesday January 8th, 1941

My dear All,

Last Thursday night, or to be more correct, it was about 1.30 on Friday morning, I had a very nasty turn of incessant coughing for half an hour and could hardly get my breath. I felt as though anything might happen. At last a lot of frothy stuff came away but I was pretty well exhausted. When Mary came in the morning, as she generally does from Mr Metcalf's, she advised getting the doctor again. He was not able to come before two p.m. when he examined me again and prescribed entirely fresh medicine which has certainly relieved me. I won't worry you with all the details but yesterday afternoon, after my usual rest, I had another bout of coughing which was very exhausting. A strong dose of bicarbonate of soda gave relief. Doctor has put me on a diet ration but it seems as though there is very little I am allowed to eat. Charcoal biscuits are included in my diet. Last night, however, after going to bed about 9, I slept right through till about five this a.m. without coughing once for which I am very thankful. I have only been out of the house once during the last ten days and then I went by taxi to get a shave. Mom says my face was like a prickly pear and I can quite believe it. The heat has been dreadful, last Sunday it was 104 in the shade. This was followed by a shower giving 30 points but we want a great deal more.

Congratulations to Denis who I see has passed his second year B.A. exam. Jeffrey has also done well in his B.Sc. We are looking forward to seeing Rex's name when the Matric results come out which are expected shortly.

Xmas 1939 we bought three ready made Christmas puddings but only used two of them. We opened the other on New Year's day and found it quite good. Aunt Eliza even enjoyed some of it.

Later. Doctor has been again this morning and says we must just notice what foods do not agree with me and of course avoid them. He says Dr Scholtz will be back from his holiday next week and will go into the matter further.

We have not heard definitely when Douglas will be coming down. Had a letter from Lynne this morning. She reports that they had a very happy time at Xmas and New Year. We hope Evelyn will come with Douglas. I don't remember her being in this house. We are sorry to hear that Dot is troubled with an abscess in her ear. Hope it has yielded to doctor's treatment. Joe and Blodwen have returned safe and sound from their week on the farm near Bethlehem. They have enjoyed the scenery but the table was not up to much. They had a puncture a few miles from home and spoilt a tube.

We have shifted the garden seat from the front stoep to under the vines and find it more convenient. It is very nice sitting out at the back "in the gloaming". Mrs Macleod is very attentive and is willing enough to do what she can. She has been making a dress and other garments for Mom. Mrs Cursons called to say goodbye. She is going to Johannesburg to one of her daughters on Saturday. We are to have her servant at the end of February as her other daughter wants to keep her till then.

I have started trimming some of the many pictures I have collected for many years and I find it very interesting but also find my hands are very shaky and cannot cut straight. I will get used to it in time.

I do not feel that I can write more this week so will close, with lots of love to all and many thanks for all your letters and good wishes.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
Wednesday January 15th, 1941

My dear All,

Thus far did I get by ten this morning when I walked Douglas, he having caught a train via Bloemfontein yesterday afternoon. He wired us that he was coming and needless to say, we were pleased to have him. He had a few hours with Joe at the station and reports him looking well. Blodwen was not feeling too well so did not go to the station.

My next words must be thanks to all the family for their kind wires and letters of loving congratulations on passing my 77th mile-stone. These stones which we pass along the main roads are hewn out of solid rocks as a rule and would be heavy to move. With increasing years, the weight of responsibilities increases and it is difficult to shake them off. Let me thank all of you who sent letters and telegrams with good wishes for my birthday. All are greatly appreciated. We had a few visitors in to morning tea, including the Mayor and Mayoress and some of the Councillors.

Douglas wired from Kimberley that he was arriving on Wednesday morning and we are very pleased to have him. He spent an hour or two with Joe in Bloemfontein and reports him looking very well. Douglas has brought us some wonderful peaches from their garden. Some of them weight twelve ounces each and are perfectly sound.

I do not want to dwell upon my health unduly but I am glad to say I have not had to have the doctor to me this week. Dr Scholtz is due back from his month's holiday this week when no doubt he will overhaul me again. There seems no end to the number of suggested courses of action we should take but so far we are just staying "put" until way opens. I have spent a good deal of time in cutting out - trimming - hundreds of pictures that I hope some day will find their way into scrap albums. Mary has shown some of them to Mr Metcalf and he has expressed great interest in them. You will be glad to know that Mr Metcalf is so much better that they are able to care for him without Mary's help. He is not allowed downstairs and I am not allowed to go up stairs to see him, but I am hoping in the course of a few days, he will be down on the ground floor. Mary is going to Friends Monthly meeting in Port Elizabeth on Friday night. I am not going, it would be too much of a rush and besides the excitement would not do me any good.

Our old friends, Rev and Mrs Legg, are moving to the Natal area in March. I understood he was retiring from the ministry. Another item of news is that Mr W.Y. Russell, former Principal of the Boys High School, is taking an appointment at Tiger Kloof, Vryburg.

It has taken me on and off part of two days to do this typing and I am tired and unable to concentrate anymore so will leave off here hoping next week to do better. Again, many thanks for all the loving messages received for my birthday.

Lots of love from
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
Tuesday February 4th, 1941
Mom is 79 today

My dear All,

It is Tuesday afternoon and we are shortly expecting a few ladies to come to afternoon tea so I do not know how far I shall be able to get with this letter.

Let me say right here and now how thankful I am that I am able to write as Paul used to say "with my own hand". So far did I get when visitors and rain came so I had to stop. It is now Wednesday morning and I must try to get this off today or tomorrow. I think this is the fourth week since I wrote a dear all. I am fully conscious that I have treated you all very badly so far as news is concerned. Take for instance where my own birthday is concerned. I did not refer to the kind presents I received from one and another. Olive gave me a bottle of sweets made with glucose. Mary a hankie and such a sweet card. In the evening Miss Loscombe brought Aunt Eliza down in her chair and Mr Thomas came as well. Aunt Eliza regaled us all with ice-creams, brought in a large thermos flask. She stayed until about nine. For Mom's birthday, we did not need ice-creams as it was quite cold enough. We had over a dozen lady friends in for morning tea and about the same number in the afternoon. Mr Stock was the only man friend beside myself. Of course we had a cake with 1862-1941 on it. I am glad to say I was feeling much better than I have done for a very long time. I remarked that the days of miracles have not passed.

On Monday afternoon Doctor overhauled me as usual and after a long chat, he decided to change my medicine again. The stuff he was giving me then was too dreadful for words. After the first dose, I point blank refused to take any more until I had seen Doctor or the chemist. It seemed to burn my throat and chest all the way down. I thought there must be some mistake in the prescription or dispensing. When he came next day, I asked him if he considered the medicine was fit for human consumption. He told me there was sulphuric acid in the mixture and I could dilute the quantity with fruit juice. It was awful stuff. However the change was different. I went to bed about eight that evening after taking the first dose and it seemed to work a miracle. I slept very soundly until after midnight when I woke feeling a new man, cough gone and expectoration stopped. I slept on more or less soundly until morning – which I have not done for a very long time. I was certainly better all day yesterday than I have been for a very long time. Last night I did not have such a good night. Now Dr has put me on to Bengers Food and so it goes. I have not been up town for weeks. Ernest very kindly offered to take us for a spin on Sunday afternoon but he could not get his car to go and not only that, but it rained during the afternoon. Olive has been very kind in taking us sometimes but we had a note from her yesterday saying she had sprained her ankle and could not come to the party yesterday. We must get a taxi and go and see her this afternoon, if it does not rain. We had 60 points yesterday, making nearly two inches for February. Aunt Eliza was debarred from coming yesterday also by the rain but expects Mary will bring her along later. Letters have come for Mom from all of you. Evelyn is sending some of her famous rusks.

Did I tell you that after one of Doctor's examinations, he told me he could not find anything "organically" wrong with me and that he considered I was good for another ten years. This leads me to making a confession. I have often said that I did not mind living to be 150 on one condition and that was that I could work and be of some service to others, but if I could not do that, and that I became a burden to others, my prayer was that I might go hence. I now realise that I was trying to make a bargain with God. This illness is teaching me that was wrong. That we must trust Him to know what is best for each one of us.

During my illness I have not been able to keep a record of our visitors as I have done for years past. Other records have also had to be dropped.

Mr Thomas kindly offered to type for me but he is very busy and I did not like to trouble him. I hope you will be able to read what I have written. No doubts there are plenty of mistakes. It is dinner time and I am tired and close with very dear love and thanks to all for all kindnesses shown to your

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
as Wednesday February 12th, 1941

My dear All,

It is Tuesday afternoon and I feel somewhat encouraged by my attempt of last week to see if I cannot go one better this week. Let me say with all thankfulness that though I am still very weak, I am, I think, making some progress. I went up town one morning (by taxi) for a shave and took advantage of weighing myself at the chemists. I have lost 7½ (seven and half) pounds since I weighed a month ago. I am 14 pounds lighter than when in East London. My appetite seems to be returning so perhaps I shall soon make up what I have lost. It is just eight p.m. We have had a procession of visitors this afternoon, including Mary who frequently drops in like a visiting angel. A sharp thunderstorm has passed over us and Mary stayed to supper. Ina MacLeod's daughter came out of hospital about dinner time this a.m. and will stay with us sometime until she is fit to return to her home at Clumber. She lost her husband a few months ago very suddenly. She has two children, one at boarding school in Queenstown. I must now to bed.

Wednesday afternoon 12th. Mr Stock kindly motored me up to see Mr Immelman, the Manager of Standard Bank here, who has just returned from East London where he has been staying for some months on account of his health. He was staying close to Tenby Hotel but what a difference by all accounts to the comforts he has had to we had at Tenby. He has just been pensioned from the Bank on account of his heart and is selling out here and going back to East London. This may affect our future movements.

Doctor was here whilst I was out. He says I may stop taking those expensive tablets (21/-) a bottle. I have consumed at least three or four bottles. I am sorry I did not see him as I should have liked his opinion re my losing weight. Ina's daughter is getting on very nicely. Dr saw her here. Her youngest child is eleven today. She is staying out at Tarka at present. By the way, Grace's Pam will be 11 next week. Ina is doing very well for us. She is a good cook and sees to things nicely. She has been with us a month and a half.

In last week's Outspan, Ruth has a love story. She is evidently breaking out in a new line of writing. I cut out from the Eastern Province Herald a photo of her husband and have it before me as I write. He looks a very jolly man, which from all accounts he is. I hope to meet him one of these days. Blodwen says she has a few articles submitted for publication in the Outspan. I hope she will be successful in having them published.

Joe writes that he is thinking of resigning from the Railway and taking a job on one of the mines or perhaps getting a transfer. It is a big undertaking when one is fairly established in his own property etc. But I am sure he will not do anything rash.

Mr Metcalf called to see me a few days ago. I returned his call but he had gone to his office. He has beaten me in getting better first. We have had numerous visitors. I have been trying to get this finished but it has been hopeless. Old Mr Trollip (94) has been a couple of times, not today. The Dodds and children have also been. I wish I had been able to keep a record of them all. Our figs are about finished but there are plenty of grapes still. Unfortunately I am not allowed to eat either. I am getting back to more solid foods by degrees. Evelyn has kindly sent us parcels of her famous rusks and cookies which are greatly appreciated. We are looking forward to her visit with Douglas and the two youngest children at Easter.

Thursday morning, 13th. I had quite hoped to post this yesterday afternoon so that Douglas could get his copy on Friday when there is always someone in town. Dulcie and May called and their three little boys and in the evening Ina's husband and Rev Weavers called and so time is fully occupied. Amy Collett also called to see if she could do some typing for me. I should have been glad of such help if she could have come when I first asked her but now I am able to do it myself. Aunt Eliza has not been down for a few days. It has rained on six days out of the twelve so far this month. Uncle Dudley tells us he has had seven inches in five weeks – since January 1st and that Grass Ridge dam is only five feet from the top. With our March rains, it should be overflowing this season.

It is a very long time since I sent two pages but it is quite quiet this morning and as I was up a little earlier than usual, I will see what I can do. Joyce and Raymond are still away at Cape Town and we do not know for certain when they will be returning to Aunt Eliza. She is having to store her furniture until the war is over. It has been nice for her having had Muriel and her children at Cape Town for part of the time.

Did I tell you that Mr Thomas lent me a sitz bath he had had made but never used. You sit in this bath with your feet hanging out. The idea is to ease the lower portion of the body but the difficulty I found was to get in and out of the bath, even with Mom's assistance. When in, the effect was certainly comforting. Aunt Eliza also lent me a sort of bed rest. Instead of putting a chair upside down in the bed and being supported by pillows, she had knitted a very strong cotton – years ago – a sort of hammock but instead of using it long-ways, you fasten the two ends to the foot of the bed and the hammock part comes over the shoulders and back and you have a very nice support.

Our M.O.H. is a great believer in Kaffir beer as a tonic for tummy troubles. So after getting permission to get a bottle, I tried it. I found that as supplied, it was more in the nature of gruel and was too strong for my taste. However Mrs Webster kindly gave us a recipe which I think she got from Evelyn and which Douglas finds does him good. This was thinner and a little more palatable but somehow they have never been able to get it to rise properly. The Websters and Dulcie have kept us going with ice from their coolers. At one stage I craved for everything ice cold. I have been fed on Barley Bovril, barley water etc. etc. Of course in addition to all these good things, there have been jellies, junkets, custards, and yet in spite of all this feeding up, I have lost weight.

I do not know what has gone wrong with my scalp. For some time now it has been itching most furiously. Perhaps it is the medicine but it will not be long at this rate that I shall be as bald as Douglas or Joe.

At the end of January I received a letter from Norman Butler saying that all the nephews and nieces overseas were not unanimous with regard to the suggestion I made a year or so ago about the final distribution of my Father's estate so I have decided to drop the whole matter. I will return the document you each signed for you to destroy.

News has come today, via Aunt Emmie, that Norman's wife has had a serious operation for cancer near Bristol. I hope it wasn't at the time that the city was being so heavily bombed. I shall be anxious for later news.

Last evening Mom and I walked as far as the corner of the park so you see I am getting on. I am thankful to say that Mom is keeping very well but I do not know how we should have managed without Mrs MacLeod. Her daughter is leaving us on Saturday for Tarka where she will stay with the Rayners until she is well enough to travel to her home at Clumber, near Grahamstown. I think I told you her brother-in-law, Wilfred Cawood, is helping her.

If I have not answered your letters – and I know I have not done – please forgive me. There are lots of personal matters I want to refer to one another which I will do as opportunity offers.

For this week I must say goodbye. My afternoon nap is now due.

Lots of love to each and all from

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
Wednesday February 19th, 1941.

My dear All,

I do not anticipate being able to write two sheets as I did last week, for one thing we have accepted an invitation to attend a welcome to the new Principal of the Boys' High School this afternoon at 4 and I should get my letter in the post by 5 if Douglas is to get his copy on Friday morning. Letters for the others do not arrive any sooner if posted Wednesday afternoon than if posted on Thursday as then they go by the fast mail on Thursday evening and arrive in Bloemfontein and Kroonstad on Friday before noon and in Potgietersrus on Saturday morning. However I must see what can be done about it.

It is war time and we are encouraged to avoid waste. I have hundreds of envelopes addressed to us by senders of Xmas cards. The flaps of some have not been closed. It would save each of you a shilling or two if I send you a 100 or so and you could use them for other correspondence too. I think I shall take to using them in posting to you. I generally get 1000 printed every year (apart from what I use for Xmas cards, so that would be another small additional saving.

I had a letter from Dick Brown recently. He is glad to be home again but was laid up when he wrote. Am glad to say he is in fairly comfortable circumstances and is hoping soon to be better. The job is to find suitable employment.

Last Saturday morning I took a taxi as far as Aunt Eliza and walked back, calling and resting at the barbers for a shave. I was quite tired by the time I got home. Last evening Mom and I walked up the lane to post some letters and then round the block as far as Cull and Kews corner. That was quite far enough but it shows that I am getting on. On Monday I attended some Council Committee meetings in the morning but when they were finished, I was feeling giddy and nearly fell in the office. One of the staff brought me back by taxi. Monday evening Mom went to a social (W.C.T.U.) at the Parsonage and some visitors dropped in here unexpectedly to see Mrs MacLeod and it was ten before we went to bed. I had one of the best nights natural sleep that I have had for many weeks. That was Friday not Monday night. Ina's daughter left on Saturday afternoon for Tarka farm, Rayner's, where she will stay until the end of the school quarter, then she goes home to her own farm in the Clumber district. She told me that her Mother would "free" then so I suppose we shall be losing her services about Easter. She has been a great help and we must look round and see what other plans can be made for the future.

Joyce Townshend is not back from Cape Town. Aunt Eliza will be very glad to have her as soon as she can come.

Letter from Grace this a.m. reports lots of rain, tanks all full and the reservoir got a good supply. She thinks she is set up for the whole of the year. Ted's parents have been on a visit to them and have now returned to Doonside. Grace is worried with servant troubles. Good ones seem hard to get or to keep.

Joe reports rain almost every day. He is still thinking of making a change. He has had enquiries for the purchase of his house. I would like him to get a transfer to East London if he stayed on in the S.A. R. He must, of course, decide for himself. A letter from Dot today but we had a postcard yesterday reporting all well and full up with meetings, sewing etc.

You will be interested in knowing that Milner's wife is staying at the same place as Ruth and her husband. Two of her boys are at Kingswood.

You all will be sorry to know that Norman Butler's wife, Elsie, has had her right breast removed for cancer. The "op" was performed at Weston-Super-Mare, about 12 miles from Bristol, just before Xmas and about the time Bristol was so heavily bombed. We are anxious to hear how she is getting on. Her parents live in France they have not had any news from them for a long time.

I think I have done enough writing for today but if I have time to do more tomorrow, I will do so. Am glad to report Mom is keeping nicely and I am slowly improving in health.

Love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday February 26th, 1941

My dear All,

For many years I have always been the first up in the mornings and the last to go to bed at night. During my illness, this has all been changed and I have frequently been the first to bed – often before eight – and not up until eight so as to be in time for the news service at 8.15. I am now trying to get back to my old habits but as the days are getting shorter, I do not know how far I shall get in early rising. I am glad to say that I am still gradually improving in health. Last Thursday evening we all went to evening service for the first time for months. I had hoped to go to church on Sunday evening last but it was such a close night, it was thought best for me to stay at home. I have managed to walk as far as my barbers once or twice lately without any ill effects so you see I am getting on. Last night was our Town Council meeting and the Mayor was very anxious that I should attend so he sent a taxi for me and I am glad to say that I do not feel any the worse for the effort. They welcomed me back and without asking for it, allowed me to remain seated instead of rising to address the chair. During the meeting, we experienced a severe rain and hail storm, it was so noisy on the roof that we had to adjourn the meeting for some minutes – during which we had light refreshments. Fortunately, there was not any wind with the storm otherwise all our grapes and figs would have been smashed to pieces. We have registered four inches of rain this month, which is unusual.

Doctor was here to examine me on Monday 24th and was pleased with my progress. Blood pressure had risen to 140 which he thinks satisfactory. A fresh complication has developed during recent weeks. I have noticed a number of small sort of pimples on the back of my hands and on my arms which itch most violently. I was afraid that it might be eczema but doctor says it is not. It has also affected my scalp. The pimples break and the skin peels off. It is most irritating. He has given me some ointment to apply and I hope the trouble will yield to treatment.

We are expecting Rev and Mrs Legg this afternoon to spend the night on their way to their new appointment in Natal. It will be nice to see them again. I hope they have a dry journey over the mountain.

Since commencing this letter, we have just heard from Joe and Blodwen that he is transferred to Uitenhage and he expects to leave this week. Blodwen will remain in Bloemfontein until the end of March when Joe will go and fetch her. They have let their house to a young married couple for £9 per month with option of purchase. On one of our holidays with Joe, we went over the workshops in Uitenhage and liked them very much. Joe has to pay their travelling expenses as he applied for the transfer. The reason for his asking for a transfer is the unsatisfactory way one of the head men in the workshop treats those under him. Joe will break his journey here. Uitenhage is just 200 miles from Cradock whereas Bloemfontein is 450 miles, so we shall be much nearer each other. Blodwen's married sister, Mrs Merrifield lives in Port Elizabeth so they will be close to each other. Uitenhage is only 18 miles by road and 21 by train from Port Elizabeth. It is a very pretty town but I think the climate is very humid. Grace writes that Ted's parents have returned to their home at Doonside. David and Harold can both drive their motorcar but are too young yet to obtain motor licences.

We have not heard when Joyce and Raymond are returning to Aunt Eliza but expect it will be pretty soon. Leslie Collett dropped in on Sunday for about half an hour. They have two children at the Convent school here so came to see them for the weekend. He says Uncle Owen and Aunt Kate had an exciting journey to Vryburg. They travelled for miles through water and had to leave their car at a river and cross in a donkey wagon. This was near Pudimoe. Eric was with them at the time.

Mrs Curson's servant has been today and says she is coming to work on Saturday, March 1st. We have not been successful with any since Ina left at the end of November last. Grace seems to have trouble with her domestics as well. It does make one long for a place where servants can be done without. They seem to be a trouble all over the world.

Lots of love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock.
As Wednesday March 5th, 1941

My dear All,

Did anyone not receive a copy of last week's letter? My reason for asking is that after I posted, I found I had one copy over. I am sorry if I made a mistake.

Well there are two items of news this week that I'm sure will interest you. Last week I told you Joe was being transferred to Uitenhage (at his own request). He wired that he was leaving Bloemfontein on Friday night by train so of course Mom and I were over at the station on Saturday morning to see him. He had evidently forgotten that there is a day and night train from here so we persuaded him to break his journey here and give us the pleasure of his company for the day and save him travelling in the heat all day. Besides, he could not have done anything on Saturday evening as shops etc would be closed. He therefore wired to one of his friends to meet him on Sunday a.m. We have a postcard from him this (Tuesday) morning saying he is staying at HANDSWORTH HOUSE, UITENHAGE so you all had better make a note of his address. Let me correct a mistake I made last week. I find that Uitenhage is only 71 miles nearer Cradock than Bloemfontein, so there is not much difference. I also notice by the directory that Uitenhage is more than double the population of Cradock, including non Europeans. The water supply is better but I am surprised they have not got a water-borne sewage scheme. Uncle Gervase lived in Uitenhage for some years after leaving the farm in order to see to the education of his daughters. From all accounts it is a pretty place and is only 69 feet above sea level. We hope Joe and Blodwen will like it there and be very happy.

The other item of news is not so cheerful. On Saturday evening Mrs McLeod had the misfortune to scald her leg very badly. She had removed a pot of hot water from the oven in the stove and in putting it on the floor, upset it scalding her shin and some splashing up her leg above the knee. We did not know anything about it till next morning. We had carron oil in the house which would have relieved the pain somewhat. She applied paraffin etc. On Sunday afternoon Olive came along to take us for a short spin but by the time we got back, her leg was very painful. Fortunately Mary came in after church and dressed it. She has been in daily since then and she is able to move about a little. It is also fortunate that I am able to resume some of my former duties and so help out.

Our new servant arrived on March 1st and so far seems a great improvement on the substitute. Hope she keeps it up.

On Wednesday afternoon, Rev and Mrs Legg arrived from Graaff Reinet by car and we had a very enjoyable time together. Mrs Weavers was here at the same time and later Rev Weavers also called to see them. They left at seven Thursday morning for UNDERBERG, NATAL and hoped to reach Durban by Friday evening. Mr Inglis, one of my S.O.E. friends of Cape Town but now in Port Elizabeth, also called to see Mary. He knows Honor Biggs in Port Elizabeth. Uncle Norman and Aunt Gladys were in on Friday afternoon. They report that their son, Neville, has been on a short visit to Douglas but we have not yet had any news of such from Douglas.

I forget if I told you that I have been troubled for some weeks with some sort of skin trouble. It affects my scalp and arms at present. At first I thought it might be eczema but doctor and Mary say it is not. It is most itchy and one wants to be scratching the places all day. However it is yielding to treatment slowly. It forms little scabs and the skin peels off. Personally I think it is the after effects of all the medicine I have had to take.

Ruth has sent us a nice photo of Mr Mackenzie. She also says she is giving up her secretarial duties at the Settlers Club at the end of the month as she finds the work too much for the small remuneration she gets and it interferes with her writing. Denis is settled at the University for his third year course for his B.A. degree.

Sunday was the first time for several weeks, if not months, that I have felt well enough to go to church. Being the annual harvest festival and thanksgiving day, I felt that I wanted to attend. I am glad to say the effort has not had any detrimental effect. I certainly have much to be thankful

for. On our way back from our motor spin on Sunday afternoon, I was able to call and see a Coloured Minister in his location who has been very ill for some time. He is getting better now.

Uncle Gervase had dinner with us today (Tuesday) and he speaks very well of Uitenhage, both from a climatic and residential point of view. The schools are good and living he considers cheap.

Hilda George called this a.m. to see how we were. Mom was out part of the time to morning tea with Mrs Stock.

Wednesday morning 5th. It looks as though it is going to be another hot day. It was only 102 in the shade yesterday. I have received my doctor's account up to the end of January £8.13.6d. I must be thankful it is not more. He will come and overhaul me again about the end of this month. I weighed myself yesterday again and find I am still going down but only 1¼ lb this time. I cannot understand it as my appetite is much better than it was. I have stopped taking all medicines except glucose.

The following comparative figures taken from this year's Official Year Book may be of interest showing the difference between Cradock and Uitenhage.

<u>Cradock</u>		<u>Uitenhage</u>
Europeans	3737	9774
Non Europeans	<u>5301</u>	<u>11429</u>
Total	<u>9038</u>	<u>21203</u>
Rateable value	£676 385	£1 280 560
Area	14 000 morgen (including commonage)	8080 morgen

We have given some thought to how, when and where to celebrate the Golden Wedding. Of course it would be nice if it could be at Grass Ridge, as we were married there, but I do not see that we can move in that direction. There is also the original suggestion that we take the four cottages at Rockcliff (East London) or, of course, we could arrange to hold it here. It does not appear to me that we can move in the matter except to invite all our children and grandchildren and in-laws. That would total 27 souls. Then there are brothers and sisters and nephews and nieces and relations who no doubt would like to come besides members of the public. Such an event could easily run into hundreds. Of course it is too early to make any definite plans, many things might happen between March and October but on the other hand, it is no good to leave everything to the last minute. The school holidays in October, so far as the Cape is concerned, is from September 26th to October 7th. Grace and Dot must find out the dates for the Free State and Transvaal respectively. Mom thinks we might have the festivities at Fish River and split up the families amongst the various homes in the neighbourhood and the Hall at the Station for a Reception etc. Of course if it was held in town, we could easily arrange accommodation near to us and the catering would no doubt be easier. Aunt Agnes (our bridesmaid) and Uncle Owen (Aunt Rosa's best man) are the only ones still living who were at the wedding besides the ordinary guests. If it materialises, this will be the first such event in the Collett family. We should like to arrange for a short service in connection with the event and also a series of photographs.

Later. Letters to hand this morning from Evelyn, Grace and Dot. No reference is made to Neville Collett's visit to Douglas' so, perhaps he did not go. Reg has not been too well, in fact away from the office for some few days. He is looking to go to Vryburg, and perhaps here, in April.

Mrs MacLeod is still unable to do anything. She gets up daily and sits about but the leg is very painful and raw. Mary is coming again this afternoon to dress it. Our new maid is doing well so far. I have resumed my early rising (6.30) and things are running smoothly.

I guess I have written enough for this week so will stop with much love to each and all as though named.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock.
Wednesday March 12th, 1941.

My dear All,

It is early morning and nice and fresh sitting on the back stoep but when it gets too warm, I have to go inside.

The news this week is that Joe and family are on the move. I sent each of you a card on Sunday night saying he had phoned saying he had secured a house and tomorrow morning I am going over to the station to see him as he passes through to Bloemfontein. He looks to return by car some time about the end of the week and spend one night in Cradock. I wired to Blodwen first thing on Monday morning and may have news to report later when we get this morning's post. Joe was very modest when I asked him, when he was here, if there had been any farewells before he left. We hear via Blodwen that he was presented with a very nice dinner service, 50 odd pieces and that he was loudly cheered by his fellow workmen. He is very pleased with the transfer and would not go back to Bloemfontein, even if on promotion. He does not think the house he has secured will do permanently but will give them the chance of looking round and being on the spot is a great advantage. Further news will be of interest to all.

I am glad to say that Mrs Macleod's leg is so far better that she is able to be about and help. She has suffered a great deal of pain with it.

In addition to Ina's leg trouble, we have been greatly inconvenienced by our new maid getting into trouble and having to appear in Court twice as she was accused with about 80 others in the location with fighting. Last week she was away two days and again this week, one day. This placed a lot of extra work on Mom. She is working today but I understand will have to appear again. I must try to get at the bottom of the trouble as she does not appear to be that sort of girl that would get in trouble like that.

Troubles never come singly is an old saying. I have noticed the skeleton clock has not been keeping such good time as usual and on Sunday, when doing the usual weekly winding, the chain round the drum of the main spring broke. This also happened in Vryburg years ago. Fortunately the globe did not catch it. It is in the clockmaker's hands now.

Don't think we are getting frivolous but one evening we three even had a game of Lexicon and quite enjoyed it. I am confident we do not have enough recreation. Last evening we three went to a combined meeting (service) of Toc H and Toc Emmaus in the Methodist Church. This was followed by a combined discussion on International Federation. Mom and Ina did not care to attend this so I did alone. Mary, Ernest and Alison and the Lidbetters and others were there. It was quite interesting but I think it will be many years, if ever, before the scheme is brought into fruition.

Uncle Gervase and Rouena were here to dinner with little Hope a few days ago. The poor little mite has whooping cough and doctor says she must be put to bed for the present to avoid complications. Most of the children attending the Fish River School are down with the same complaint.

We are expecting Mrs Seller, Aunt Kate's sister, to call. She has been in Cape Town for some weeks and was going to Rooispruit but as Uncle Owen and Aunt Kate are up in the Vryburg district, she could not go there. She was also to stop at Fish River but owing to whooping cough, has not done that. She is going on to Port Elizabeth tomorrow morning.

Mom went to afternoon tea at Rocklands yesterday afternoon but I do not know if it was that, or going to Toc H last evening, but she woke about four this a.m. coughing and sneezing most violently. I am keeping her in bed until it is warmer. For the first time for several weeks, I played a few pieces on the pianola without getting excessively tired, but I could not keep it up.

Later. Mrs Seller has spent the morning here. She saw Aunt Emmie in Cape Town a few weeks ago. We have no news yet of when Joyce is returning to Cradock.

Letters from Grace and Dot to hand. Grace thinks the Golden Wedding must be celebrated here. They will only be able to come for a couple of days. Dot and family went to Johannesburg for the weekend. Leslie is still troubled with his leg, otherwise they all seem well.

Mom's cold seems quite better this afternoon. Love to all, Dad.

34 Dundas Street, Cradock.
Wednesday March 19th, 1941

My dear All,

Here is the news, as the announcer on the wireless says. Joe did pass through on Thursday on his way from Uitenhage to Bloemfontein and I saw him for the few minutes the train stops here. Incidentally we loaded him up with grapes and figs. He wired us saying they hoped to arrive here by car about 8.30 on Saturday evening but just at dinner time that day, we received two wires from them at Edenburg, one of them saying they had been delayed by engine troubles and asking me to wire him some cash. This I did at two p.m. and still hoped they would arrive later that night. During the evening, he rang up from Philippolis saying they had still got car trouble and could not get further that night. They had been through a hail storm, rain, and the roof leaked. The water in the radiator had given trouble ever since they left Bloemfontein. At every stopping place, they had tried to get fixed up and returned to Edenburg. They also experienced a hailstorm and the roof of the car leaked. The children and maid cried and there was general discomfort. However, they got as far as Philippolis by stopping at every convenient roadside windmill or tank. Unfortunately they had a following wind which is always bad for the engine. They phoned from Philippolis saying they had put the car in a garage and the mechanic hoped to have it fixed up by the morning. Joe thought it might be necessary to leave the car and come on by train but as we did not have any further phone message on Sunday morning, I assumed they were still coming by car and would probably arrive about dinner time. Mom stayed home from church as she was not feeling well – hayfever – but at 12.30, sure enough, they turned up, the car still running hot and the sun standing at 98 in the shade. It is quite certain that they will not soon forget their last journey from Bloemfontein. We had to consider what was the best thing to do under the circumstances. There was no train on Sunday night so they thought they would take the morning train on Monday. However, on my suggestion, Joe took the car to our best garage and after changing oil and adjusting plugs etc. etc. and testing the car up the national road, they decided to go on by car via the Zuurburg on to Uitenhage. They left here at 2.45 p.m. and I am glad to say that at about half past ten this (Tuesday morning), we received a wire from Joe saying they arrived safely at 9.30 p.m. Monday, the only incident being a punctured tyre. He carried a spare wheel so I do not suppose they were long delayed. Fortunately the wind was in front of them this time and it is a very pretty run to Uitenhage on that road. It has been a great joy having them with us. We put them all up. Roy was thrilled in being allowed to sleep in Mrs McLeod's room. The servant occupied the back veranda. On Sunday afternoon, Aunt Eliza, Joyce, Ray and Mr Thomas paid us a visit, Joyce having arrived by train the previous evening from Cape Town after three months' absence. She and Ray are looking very well. The children were delighted to play together. They all went to Market Street to morning tea, Roy staying to dinner. Joe entertained Auntie to a small gym display, much to her enjoyment. Joyce says Auntie is looking very well after three months' absence. We all will be interested in hearing of the first impressions of their new home and how their furniture has travelled. The cost of carriage has been a good deal higher than Joe expected. He says there are three bedrooms in the house and a small garden in the front and back of the house. I guess they have been examining the premises today to see how things will fit in. We shall be glad to hear all details.

I mentioned earlier that Mom has had an attack of what appears to be hayfever. She woke one morning – quite early – coughing and sneezing with nose running etc. Am glad to say she is much better this (Tuesday) afternoon.

We had a visit last Thursday from Mrs Seller (Aunt Kate Owen's sister). She has very comfortable quarters in Port Elizabeth and wants us to visit her when in Port Elizabeth. We have been asked to entertain Mrs Maskew Miller of Cape Town for one ???

Wednesday morning. It is delightful sitting out on the back stoep in the fresh air. The sun is shining through the blue curtains whilst the maid is sweeping the dining room. Mrs McLeod is gathering and arranging flowers and the boy is watering the garden near the stoep. I have already taken the temperatures for the past 24 hours which were 89 and 59 respectively. So far we have not

had a drop of rain this month and this, according to records, is the best month for rain. Grass Ridge dam is still about three feet from the top. Mom's condition is much better and she will be out shortly. Perhaps we will go and watch the tennis tournament in the park this afternoon if it does not get too hot.

Mary tells us that Aunt Letty is thinking of coming to Cradock next month. We are trying to arrange for her to stay with us.

We are hoping soon to hear when Douglas and Evelyn and the two children will be arriving. Schools break up on 28th this month. The garage is ready for the car. I do hope they will not have the experience that Joe and family had on their trip.

Mrs McLeod is not going with her daughter, so presume she will stay on with us. Nothing has been said to the contrary. I do not say the arrangement is entirely satisfactory but it does give Mom some relief.

Our fruit is nearly finished although Joe managed to find a sufficiency of figs and grapes. We have sent a good deal to the War-market and various institutions.

I was able to attend some of the Council Committee meetings on Monday and Tuesday. We are starting on two big schemes of sub-economic houses, one of £15,000 for non-Europeans and the other of £102 000 for Europeans. Government has advanced the funds at ¾% repayable over 40 years.

The latest news from relations in England is that they were all safe. No news came regarding Norman's wife so presume she is better. It is simply wonderful how the old country is standing up to the terrible trials thrust upon them. We listen in to the overseas news every day at 8.15 a.m., 1.10 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Later A very nice post has just come. Letters from Ruth, Douglas, Grace and Dot as well as from Edith and Rev Hornabrook so I can answer them at once. Ruth says May and her boys have settled down nicely at Kingswood. She is not leaving the Settlers Club until the end of April. Denis finds his military training takes up much of his time. By the way, he has a birthday this week. Douglas says they are still looking to come to us but cannot name the day yet. Rex will come to help with the driving. Douglas and Evelyn were going to Pretoria this week and would probably bring Gwen back as she has been ordered to the coast. Gwen might look after the family whilst Douglas and Evelyn are here. Douglas and Arthur had been up to the Protectorate to inspect his drilling plant. Grace is disappointed that their reservoir does not hold water very well. Suppose they will have to reline it with cement. Dot reports good rains. Reg is better but owing to a member of his staff leaving, he will not be able to take the holiday he was looking forward to unless Dot takes full charge of his work.

I have weighed again today and have gone up 4 ounces in a fortnight. We often play lexicon in the evenings, just the three of us. This evening we have asked Mr and Mrs Graham Armstrong to come in for the evening. He is down from the front in connection with a law case.

We have read with interest the various comments on the proposed celebrations in connection with the Golden Wedding. They shall have due study.

Joe's address is 16 Mills Street, Uitenhage. Hope you all will write to him.

I think I have written enough for this week so will close with lots of love to all and hoping you are all well, yours affectionate

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141.
Wednesday March 26th, 1941

My dear All,

Am glad to report that Joe and family arrived safely at Uitenhage at 9.30 on the day they left. They had one puncture about half an hour from home, otherwise the car behaved splendidly. Joe speaks in praise of the garage that fixed him up here whereas the other places he stopped at on his way down, did not give him good service. They are very pleased with their new surroundings and have placed the two children in school at the Muir and Rebeck Colleges respectively. This is not a free school and they will have to have new books, school blazers, ties etc. etc. – all additional expense but they think it will be worth it. They will have lots to do to get the home as they want it but that can be done gradually. Roy gave them a fright whilst they were out walking. He had a sweet which stuck in his throat. Joe reversed the child but as he was turning blue, he eventually put his finger down his throat and so saved the situation.

I nearly had a trip by car to Kroonstad this week. Our Town Clerk has put in an application for the Town Clerkship there (£1000 per annum) and had to go to be interviewed by them. However as he took his wife and some of the children with him, it did not come off so far as I was concerned. I should like to have given Grace and family a surprise. I do not know yet if he has got the appointment. Some of the Councillors here want to increase his salary from £800 to induce him to stay here. Perhaps we shall hear before post closes.

Mrs Maskew Miller will not be staying with us as she is travelling in company with others and accommodation has been reserved for the party at one of the hotels. I shall have the opportunity of meeting her as I knew her fairly well in connection with the temperance work in Cape Town.

We expect to hear any day now when to expect Douglas and Evelyn. Rex will also come so as to help with the driving. We have not seen Evelyn and the two little ones since we were all at East London over two years ago.

Mr McLeod has informed us that she is not staying after the end of the month. So far we have not taken any steps to get anyone else in her place and I don't think we shall. Later on perhaps we shall make arrangements to get our mid-day meal out.

Mary has an appointment in Graaff Reinet to look after an invalid child while its mother is in hospital. We shall miss her very much. Aunt Letty may be coming over here after Easter but nothing definite is arranged so far.

We have booked to see "The Great Dictator" at the bio tomorrow afternoon. We have not been to the pictures for many months.

Wednesday. Letters from Denis, Grace and Edith. Mr Moir, with whom Pam and Jean stayed at Belville at Xmas had recently been transferred to Johannesburg last month. Grace reports that he died suddenly. Two of their sons are on active service up north and there are three girls at school. We used to visit them when we were at Observatory. We are very sorry for his wife and children. Am glad to hear that Grace has some good servants and hope they will stay.

I attended the Council meeting last night without any ill effect. I had to preside for part of the time as the Mayor was financially interested in certain matters.

Mary has just called and says she expects to go to Graaff Reinet on Friday and her Mother may be coming over here about the end of April. Dan and Josie Biggs arrived from Louisvale – via Port Elizabeth – this morning. We hope to see something of them tomorrow.

I must now go and rest before going to the Bio so am afraid you will have to go on short rations this week. As a matter of fact, there is not much news to write about.

Lots of love to all

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141.
Wednesday March 26th, 1941

My dear All,

Tuesday afternoon. A letter from Douglas this a.m. reports that Cecily went home on Friday last but Kingsley's school does not break up until April 4th and he was expected home on Saturday. Douglas himself was not well and their departure on Sunday would depend upon how he was. We do hope he will be better by then. We must wait and see. Meanwhile we are ready for them all. We had a phone message from Uncle Gervase on Sunday saying that little Hope was not well and could they bring her in for a day or two. There is a lot whooping cough at Fish River lately and the poor little mite has had a bad time. They came in this morning and have seen doctor who pronounces the child is out of quarantine and need not stay in town. They left after dinner.

Saturday evening. Jim Butler's wife, Hilda, and their three children arrived at the Poplars from Louisvale for a two days visit. We had the pleasure of their company on Sunday afternoon. Hilda is as bright and lively as ever. We have not seen them for about ten or more years. James, the youngest was not born then. He is the dead image of what his father was at that age. They enjoyed going to the park etc. Ernest had driven them to Hales Owen and Egg Rock in the morning. They are greatly impressed by what they saw. Hilda had left some of her luggage behind at Louisvale station so had to be rigged out in some of the dresses available at Ernest's. The luggage turned up the next day. They left on Monday evening by train for Port Elizabeth and are visiting her brother in Uitenhage and will try to see Joe and Blodwen. Unfortunately Jamie was not able to come with them, being on military duty.

Wednesday morning. We have been expecting Douglas and family for their long promised visit. Yesterday we had a short letter from him saying that the two Kimberley schools break up a week after the other. They are looking to start on Sunday but it will depend on how Douglas is. He complains of having to rest and by his writing, it is evident that he is far from well. We hope nothing will prevent their visit.

Monday was an important date in the family history of Joe and Blodwen and Reg and Dot, it being the anniversary of their respective wedding days. May they be spared to see many more. On Monday doctor paid his first monthly visit to overhaul me. He is satisfied with the condition of my heart which he says has greatly improved. The blood pressure was about the same, 140, which he says is reasonable considering my age. The irritations on my head are less but warts are forming in several places and I am to go to his surgery and he will remove them. He examined my spine and says my tailbone has been injured at some time or other. For some time past I have found it more comfortable to sit on an air cushion. Of course, having lost so much weight in recent months may account for some of the discomfort. He will come again in a month's time.

We went to see the Great Dictator last Wednesday afternoon. We are glad to have seen it. It was very funny in parts. The concluding speech was very good – in fact excellent. On Thursday morning we went to the agricultural show but did not stay long. The horses and cattle were good. There were no small exhibits.

We are glad to hear that Reg and Dot are both playing tennis again. That sounds like both of them being in better health. Keep it up. Joe says Roy is not happy at school but Merle likes it. They are still very pleased with the change.

The Mayors of Queenstown and Cradock have been invited to each open one of the new hostels recently built for the Rhodes University in Grahamstown about the end of this month. Our Mayor has asked me to go instead of him as he will be at Cape Town attending the Mayoral Congress. If the Council approves, I think we will go and perhaps go on to Uitenhage as well.

Dot suggests that perhaps the Golden Wedding festivities might be held at Fish River station as a sort of picnic fashion. How about the warm baths here? There is a certain amount of tent and other accommodation there. However there is plenty of time and lots may happen between now and then.

The local "boys" who are on active service are come on what is called embarkation leave. They have to entrain on Saturday morning and I understand they go to Maritzburg first. After some

time there, they expect to go up north. They are tired of doing drills and guarding prisoners of war. Two interesting engagements are announced since their return. Two of Uncle Norman's boys have got fixed up. Neville to Nancy Cuyler of Uitenhage and Godfrey to Miss Bladen who is at present qualifying as a nurse at Groot Schuur. We presume they are not marrying before they leave. Uncle Norman needs all the help he can get for ploughing etc. on their farms and perhaps one or two of the three may get extra leave. All of them look remarkably well.

Joyce has had letters from Dudley recently. We are to see them after Mr Metcalf has read them.

Dan and Josie were down for a few hours last week. We only saw Josie for a few minutes. They had far too much rain a few months ago with the result that they lost about three quarters of their sultana crop.

Mary has looked in from time to time as usual but is at present in Graaff Reinet having been fetched to attend a very serious case of a child about two years old and is suffering from some disease so that he cannot grow properly. He is a mere skeleton. There is no knowing how long she will be away. Aunt Letty is looking to come over about the end of April and I think will stay with us.

Mrs McLeod was away for a couple of days at Tarka to see her daughter before she left for her home near Grahamstown. She has asked to stay on until Saturday morning when she looks to go to the farm and later to her daughter's farm. Her daughter-in-law is passing through on Friday night on her way to Barkley West where she has obtained a situation as a teacher, she is taking her children with her. Her husband is somewhere up north.

We have not made any plans yet for the future. I do not think we shall try any further experiments of getting someone in to help. Mrs McLeod has been a great assistance, especially when I was so ill. We must get our mid-day meals either sent to us or go to a boarding house. Mom is not to have the bother of cooking whatever happens.

I was up at Aunt Eliza's this morning. She is wonderfully well and as busy as ever doing knitting etc. as usual. Joyce is a great help and comfort. Raymond has brought a tricycle from Cape Town and enjoys riding down here and to the park etc.

It is terribly hot again today, nearly 100 in the shade as I write.

No letter from Dot so far this week, but hope to get one tomorrow. Grace reports all well in her household.

Our new Postmaster is a Mr Holtzer from Burghersdorp. Mrs Forbes writes that they are very nice people and belong to the Methodist church so we shall sure to see something of them. Don't we wish Ted could get transferred here.

I have written quite enough for this week so will stop and get on with my scrapbook job.

Lots of love to all in each home,

Yours affectionately

Dad

Handwroth House, Uitenhage
as Wednesday April 16th, 1941

My dear All,

As it is doubtful as to what our movements may be for the next week or so, I think I had better try to do a little writing each day or so, so as to keep more or less up to date. I am making rather a bad start as it is already Saturday evening and we have been here two days and I am only now beginning.

We left home on Thursday morning, the train being two and half hours late in starting. Rev Weavers kindly took us to the station but just as we had come out of our house and getting into the car, Mr and Mrs Reg Smallman came to call on us. I had recently written to him on hearing of the death of his brother in Canada. The Smallmans used to live next door to us when we lived in Market Street, Cradock years ago. Reg and his wife were down on a visit. He has recently retired as Manager of the Barclays Bank and is on pension. It was very interesting talking of old times but as none of you know anything of them, I will not burden you. Suffice it to say his father was circuit steward here in the church and here lived next door to us. He was interested in seeing the photographs of the former ministers in the vestry.

It was dark when we reached Zwartkops station where we changed into the Uitenhage train. A very cold wind was blowing off the sea but we did not have to wait very long. Mom had felt a bit queer, owing to the heat in the train but soon recovered after a bottle of soda water. After having supper with Joe and Blodwen and family, we came to the boarding house where we are fairly comfortable. It is an old building, thick walls, inside shutters etc.

Friday (Good Friday). Joe took us for a spin round the town in the morning and we were very favourably impressed with the beauty of the environment. The streets are well kept and for the most part are lined with jacaranda and oak trees. There is an abundance of water in all streets and the general appearance gives one the impression of a well ordered town. The streets are well lit and lights are on all night. In Cradock the lights are switched off in the streets about midnight. Coloured lights are in some streets. I am surprised that a town this size and with a large water supply has not a water-borne sewage scheme which is a great drawback. In the afternoon Joe took us to see one of the town water supply schemes – Groenvall – but we did not get so far. The district has not impressed us greatly as a farming area. In some parts, the scrubby bush – Port Jackson willow – has been cleared but this bush seems to be useless as firewood or for timber. It is just the same sort of country as we had at Rockcliff. We have not seen any decent cattle and sheep and I should think do not do well. The country we travelled is certainly pretty, undulating, wooded and water in the rivers. Where the bush has been cleared away, vegetable gardens on a large scale are in evidence. I know a considerable trade is done from here in sending vegetables to all parts of the country. It rained later in the afternoon and during the night but that did not inconvenience us. The first night we were here it was so warm that a sheet was quite enough covering whilst Friday night we were glad of blankets.

Saturday morning we all went into Port Elizabeth to do some shopping and also to see the war train which was on view for a couple of days. The rain cleared off and we had a fine day but cold. There were literally thousands of people waiting to see the train, consequently very little was seen. Shopping too was a problem. Being holiday time and the shops closing at one, it was difficult to find a place to park the car. However, Blodwen did manage to get a few things. We then went as far as Humewood and had lunch at a café. It was too windy to enjoy the beach so we went on along the Marine Drive for some distance. At one spot we saw some cars had stopped along the road so we did the same and were greatly interested in watching a number of wild monkeys in the bush which evidently have become so tame that they come to the fence in order to be fed by passing motorists. They are so tame that they take food from the hands of strangers. The wind was blowing very strongly but the way the monkeys hung on to the swaying branches was very interesting.

We spent the evening with some of Joe and Blodwen's friends from Bloemfontein, one of whom was instrumental in arranging his transfer here. One was a chum of Joe's in the same workshop but is now on the war train going all over the Union demonstrating what the Union can

produce in various ways. Unfortunately Blodwen was not feeling too grand after the motoring and evidently had symptoms of flu coming on, so she was in bed all the evening. Joe has his wireless going and the war news – which by the way has not been too good lately – provided many interesting topics for conversation. Some of the visitors' womenfolk were with them and gave us light refreshment during the evening.

Sunday. (Easter Sunday). We went to service in the Methodist Church both morning and evening. Roy was with us in the morning and Joe and Merle in the evening. Both the children attend the Sunday School. Rev Flowerday officiated as the resident minister was taking services in the country. Mr Flowerday has been a supernumerary for some years and is getting somewhat feeble, so far as his voice is concerned. He gave very appropriate and earnest addresses. He was the Resident Minister in Cradock when my brother James passed away. After a rest in the afternoon, Joe took us to van Stadens Pass, another of the spots which supplies Uitenhage with water. The rugged scenery was very grand and provides an attractive picnic spot for Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and surrounding areas. These trips are new spots to both Joe and Blodwen as they have not had time or opportunity of getting to know their environment. They are much better off for beauty spots than they were in Bloemfontein.

I should have mentioned that at the services there was no choir in the morning and in the evening it consisted of two ladies and one gent but the organist made up for what might be lacking in personnel. She is a professional player and wears the gown and mortarboard head gear, which I suppose adds dignity and effect to the service.

Monday, Bank Holiday. We all went by car to Sundays River and had a picnic lunch in the veldt on the riverbank. It was a very nice day and we all enjoyed the outing. On our return trip, we discovered that a stone or something had evidently struck the small tap under the radiator letting all the water which cools the engine escape. Fortunately Joe had a little spare supply in the car and we were able to get a fresh supply at a nearby farm and we completed our journey without further incident.

Tuesday Joe returned to his work, having had four days' freedom. We had our mid-day meal with them. He knocks off for an hour at twelve. The children do not come home from school until about 1.30. After supper, Mr and Mrs Merrifield (Blodwen's sister) and Mr Merrifield's father came out from Port Elizabeth and stayed until about 10.30. I went to a Sons of England meeting, the second chance I have had since leaving Cape Town. We had a very nice post including letters from Grace and Dot and others, including Douglas and Lynne. We were sorry to hear of the death of Mrs Sowden and Mrs Rickett, both of East London. Both were very old friends of the family. We were also sorry to hear that Trixie was still not well. Reg and Dot and the children had been down for the weekend. Douglas was still having trouble with one of his water drills but is still looking to come and see us. Arthur had competed in a local tennis tournament but did not win this time. The weather has been very hot with cool evenings. Today, Wednesday, Mom and I walked to the Magginn's Park this morning. It is a bit of a climb but very pretty. It is a treat to see the streams of water running down each side of the street. No wonder the palms and other trees grow so well. Letters from Aunt Eliza and Mary received today. Mary is back in Cradock and says Aunt Letty may be coming about the end of the month. Joyce reports everything alright at our house.

I have not said much about Joe and Blodwen's new home. The house is fairly comfortable but they have not furnished fully yet. They have bought some new things and as they get more and more settled, will do more in this direction. The garden needs attention but servants are a problem here as everywhere else. There is a substantial swing in the yard which the children enjoy. Mom has been doing little odd sewing jobs. Am glad to say she has been quite free ...

Lexham Private Hotel, Grahamstown
as Wednesday April 23rd, 1941

My dear All,

It is Monday evening and I want to catch up with my writing. My last letter I had to end rather abruptly as there was not time to fill another sheet. There was a lot more that I wanted to write about and I am not sure if I can remember all of the items. However, will try my best. On Thursday morning Mom and I went in by train to Port Elizabeth. First to Dr Stewart to keep an appointment at 11, had to wait some time. He examined both of us and we had to return after he had put some drops in our eyes. Then he wanted to see us again so we had to go in on Saturday morning. He has given us prescriptions for more powerful glasses. Mom's for reading and mine for distance. He also examined a small spot just under my operated eye which has given me a little anxiety for some time. I got Dr Scholtz to examine it recently but he said it was nothing. Dr Stewart, however, says it is evidently an abscess forming. He has given me a prescription ointment which I am to apply night and morning for three months and if it does not disperse by then, I must see him again for further treatment. It is nothing conspicuous at present but feels as though there was a thorn pricking the place. The new glasses will not be ready before the end of the week and will be sent on to Cradock. So that's that.

Whilst in town, we called on the Blunsoms and found them out of town. However when we got back to Uitenhage, they called on us and also saw Joe and Blodwen. We also called to see Honor Biggs but she was away at East London on holiday but we saw her sister, Audrey, who is giving voluntary service at the Child Welfare Society in order to gain experience. We took her out to morning tea. We then looked in on Mrs Seller but she was also out and we left word that we would call again on Saturday if we had time. We got back to Uitenhage in time for dinner (lunch). We called to see Rev and Mrs Read Marsh, the Methodist Minister whom we knew before, but he was out. In the evening Joe's friends, the van Vuurens, had arranged for us all (except the children) to go to the newly erected Railway Orphans Children's Home. They had their monthly evening entertainment and dance. The home accommodates 48 girls between the ages of nine and fifteen. The building is most conveniently arranged, twelve in each dormitory. Everything is provided free for them, including schooling. When they are over 15, they are drafted to other Homes at Rondebosch etc. They all seemed very happy and I am sure they should be. We were interested in the domestic arrangements. The kitchen range is a crude oil stove, the first of its kind in the Union and was manufactured in Cape Town. It seems to be quite a success. There were a few other visitors besides ourselves and all joined in the dance etc. Blodwen played and sang to them and a boys' orchestra from one of the schools provided the music. Blodwen's servant that she took from Bloemfontein sleeps in and so looks after the children when they are both out.

On Saturday afternoon – Joe's half holiday – he motored us to the Springs from which the town draws some of its water supply. They are situated about six miles from town, approximately 500 feet higher than the town. There are six springs in all. We found the surroundings locked – owing to war conditions – but on presenting my official card, the caretaker very kindly showed everything there is to be seen. It was most interesting. The springs have been flowing from time immemorial. The water comes bubbling up and all six springs gravitate to one spot, the yield being one million and eighty thousand gallons per 24 hours. This is conveyed through 18 inch pipes into town reservoirs and then distributed through the various streets. This is only one of the sources of supply. The water is as clear as crystal but for all that, it is passed through a chlorine system which is difficult to explain but seemed exceedingly simple. The beauty of the spot is enchanting. Palms grow in great profusion and the walks are artistically arranged. It is a charming picnic spot and being so near to town is, under normal conditions, frequently patronised. Some time ago a borehole was put down to a depth of 500 feet without affecting the yield in any way. We had refreshments at the caretaker's cottage and returned home about six to supper. Roy and Merle had had friends with them for the afternoon but no doubt when the war is over and the grounds are again open to the public, they will often go out there for picnics.

Saturday was our last day in Uitenhage. Mom wanted to spend a Sunday in Grahamstown – where she went to school – and attend Commemoration Church. So we arranged to leave by the 11 p.m. train. In order to avoid changing at Zwartkops for the main line, Joe motored us and Blodwen into Port Elizabeth about nine. We called to say goodbye to Maisie but found them out – at bioscope – so missed them. We had something warm at a milk bar before getting into our train. Fortunately we were able to get into our reserved compartment and settled down for the night before the train started. Joe and Blodwen did not wait to see us off as they had another twenty miles journey home again.

I might have mentioned that we just had time in the morning to call on Mrs Seller, after we had finished with doctor. She is comfortably settled in a room for which she pays £5 per month and she goes out for her meals. She says anytime we would like to go to Port Elizabeth for a month or more, we could have it at the same figure and she would visit her friends up country.

Thus ends the first part of our holiday. Let me say we have enjoyed it and are very favourably impressed with the town and its surroundings. Mom has been quite free of hay-fever or any complaint. We have only heard one solitary mosquito and hardly saw a fly the whole time we were there. I do not imagine that there are no such pests in the place. The boarding house did not have any rooms on the ground floor available but the 22 stairs did not seem to inconvenience me very much. By the way, I nearly had a nasty accident going up the stairs. The servant had left a bucket of water on the stairs whilst she had gone for something. Of course I did not see the bucket and whilst I did not kick the bucket, I knocked up against it. Had I been coming down instead of going up, the consequences might have been very different. I have not experienced any heart trouble all the time and the drumming in my head ceased. I did a considerable amount of walking and often got very tired. It was often uncomfortable to do much walking.

Joe and Blodwen talked about the future and would very much like us to come and live in Uitenhage. In any case, they hope we shall not attempt to carry on as before we had Mrs MacLeod so far as the mid-day meal is concerned. Of course no decision has been arrived at but we shall certainly give the matter every consideration.

Mom kept herself busy all the time we were there doing little odd mending jobs etc. The children are growing and Roy and Merle seem happy at their respective schools. Baby Trevor is very intelligent and understands all that is said to him. Blodwen still sings him to sleep in her arms. He has a will of his own and knows what he wants.

It is now Tuesday morning and I must post this tomorrow afternoon. Well we arrived at Grahamstown station at 20 to eight and to our surprise, Ruth and Mr Mackenzie were there to meet us. They brought us by taxi to this address where we are very comfortable, more so than we were in Uitenhage. Unfortunately we have to have an upstairs room, 23 steps, but we are getting used to that. The weather was decidedly cool but soon got warmer. After breakfast, we went for a short walk in the botanical gardens which are quite close by. Mom and I went to Commemoration church where Rev Stevenson Junior, who we knew at Observatory, conducted the service. Denis arrived back from the country during the afternoon and he came with us to the evening service. Milner Brown's wife and her two little boys are staying in the same annexe as Ruth and have their meals here. We spent Sunday afternoon together. We are very pleased to have met Ruth's husband and to see their quarters. These are very comfortably furnished and there is no doubt that they are very happy. May Brown, Milner's wife, and her two boys occupy the upstairs rooms. May says Milner has been up north for the last eight months. He has not had any leave and is at present in Nairobi. She has never seen him in his uniform. He is likely to be transferred to the flying squadron. On Monday, we called on Mr Waterson, formerly of Cradock. He was pleased to see us. He printed the snap enclosed which Joe took at Sundays River last Monday. We also went to see Mr and Mrs Turberville. Mrs Turberville is sister to Mrs Rose Roberts. Mr Turberville has been an invalid for some years, heart trouble. We saw them on their farm some yeas ago when we were here. I see I must stop as the sheet is full.

Love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
as Saturday April 26th, 1941

My dear All,

I feel that I should not wait until next Wednesday for my usual letter but write whilst news is fresh in my memory. We arrived home on Thursday morning, the train being up to time. My last letter was written on Tuesday and I was not able to add to it on Wednesday as we were full up with other engagements. Two addresses to think about and in the midst of that, Mrs Garnett called to see us. She had met Ruth in town. We were pleased to see her as we knew she was away from Grahamstown for six months as her daughter was away on long leave. She had some shopping to do. She is not sure if she will be attending Friends Monthly meeting in Port Elizabeth on May 25th. She is going down to Cape Town shortly.

The University Council had invited Mom and I to an official lunch at the Carlton Hotel at one p.m. There was not a large number present. The President of the Council proposed the health of the Mayor of Queenstown and me and of course these had to be replied to. This kept us until about 2.30 and the big function was timed for three. I need not dwell on this as I arranged with the local paper to send each of you a copy of any report that might be published. I have got a copy of same and of course it was by no means a full report. The Chairman of the Senate read his address as did also the Mayor of Queenstown. I did not write out my few remarks. I felt a little nervous seeing so many in their college gowns, robes etc. but managed to get through without breaking down. Photographs were taken of the opening of the two halls and the Queenstown Mayor and myself were presented with silver keys suitably engraved as mementos of the occasion. Ruth, Mr Mackenzie and Denis were present and also May.

Ruth and Mr Mackenzie have very comfortable quarters at the annexe. They just cross the road for their meals and have no bother of cooking etc. In fact it seems an ideal arrangement and so far as I am concerned, wish we had similar facilities. It does seem such a waste of energy to cook just for the two of us. Denis had dinner with us a couple of times. He boards at the University.

We were glad to have letters from each home on our arrival. Douglas is still looking to come down with Evelyn and Rex but finds it difficult to name the day. Mary says her Mother may be coming over in about two weeks time. She will be staying at Ernest's and may stay a couple of months or so. We have no other visitors in prospect. Yesterday was Uncle Walter's 86th birthday and seven years since my brother Joe passed away. Douglas says that Evelyn's sister, Emmie, is visiting them and Gwen Ambler is also in the neighbourhood. Emmie has not seen her sister Gwen for 26 years. Aunt Eliza is losing her servant Maggie at the end of this month. She is going to Cape Town. Fortunately another maid has been secured and we hope she will be as useful as Maggie has been.

David and Harold had some experience during their short holidays. They went on their bikes for a camp about thirty miles away and it rained a lot during their journeys and whilst in camp. However, they do not seem any the worse. Pam too has been on the sick list for a while and was in doctor's hands.

Reg was looking to take his mother to Vryburg after her visit to Trixie in Johannesburg. Dot says he needs a holiday. He may be away for two or three weeks. We should be pleased to see him here if he can come so far. Joe and Blodwen found the children all awake after they got home from taking us into Port Elizabeth the night we left. Blodwen is knitting me a cardigan for the winter. We have not had any frost yet or any rain whilst we were away. We let the boy remove the palm tree from our front garden whilst we were away.

Kate Dudley was on a visit to her sister in Grahamstown. We had morning tea with her. We also saw Mrs Sparkes and Mr Waterson, both old Cradock friends, also Mr Carey who used to supply us with vegetables. His wife died suddenly in Port Elizabeth last autumn.

Did I give anyone of you a lot of Xmas cards-etchings of Cape Town views etc? I cannot find them anywhere. I do not think I have room for anymore and my stock of news is about exhausted. Hope you are all well and that we shall hear from you in due course.

Lots of love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
as Wednesday April 30th, 1941

My dear All,

I seem to be doing very little else than writing dear alls lately but I hope I am not wearing you out. There is not much to record since I last wrote but when your letters come to hand, which I hope they will do on Wednesday, there may be something to write about. Today (Tuesday) I expect Vryburg is all excitement over the visit of the war train which we tried to see in Port Elizabeth but could not see much owing to the crowd of people.

I am rather expecting that Douglas and Co may come down just after the visit of the war train but he says he has to be away again by May 5th. However we shall wait and see. I see Douglas has a strong letter in the Stellalander replying to some Nationalist on the war question. There is a lot of anti-British feeling locally here too.

On Sunday just as we were about to sit down to our dinner, Uncle Gervase's daughter, Barbara, turned up with her friends, Mr and Mrs de la Haarp, by car. They had left Maritzburg the day before at twelve and arrived here just in 24 hours. He has signed on for active service. He is farming in the Graaff Reinet district and has been losing sheep from a germ which gives the animals paralysis. Barbara is going back to stay with his wife whilst he is away. They have two little boys. Uncle Gervase came in with Pam in the afternoon and took her to the farm. Aunt Agnes has been on the sick list for a while but is up again.

Uncle Jack's Gladys has whooping cough and one of her children as well. There has been a lot of cases about lately. There has been a scare of enteric locally and hundreds of Europeans and natives have been inoculated in town and district.

Aunt Letty is expected at the Poplars this week and will be staying a few weeks there. Wednesday 30th. No letters from Vryburg or Kroonstad today. Postcard from Blodwen says she and Roy have lost their voices. She is in doctor's hands for sometime but hope there is nothing seriously wrong. Dot writes that Reg is at Vryburg and Leslie and Gwen are with Trixie. Dot is looking after the office work in the meantime. The little boys are busy in her garden.

Our new glasses arrived this morning. Mom does not like hers and no doubt it will take a little time for us to get used to them.

There is a big effort on today in the Town Hall on behalf of war funds. We shall be going to it so will have to finish off my letter early. Mom has made a "door stop" out of a brick and covered it with hessian and made it look like a basket with flowers. I guess I will buy it in.

We have had just over ¼-inch of rain the last two days and the weather is much cooler. We have not had a fire in the dining room yet this winter. Four months of this year gone already. Last Sunday, 27th, was the 54th anniversary of my leaving London for Cradock. How quickly time goes.

Later. Aunt Jessie and Enid have just come in to dinner and for the bazaar this afternoon. I expect Aunt Katie and Dudley will also be in.

Our garden boy has been sick a couple of days since we returned.

Aunt Eliza's maid, Maggie, is going to Cape Town to work. She has a sister there who is here on holiday.

Lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
as Wednesday May 7th, 1941

My dear All,

It is Tuesday morning and I am sitting on the back stoep where it is bright and warm. Last night was the coldest we have had so far this winter but no frost yet. No doubt as the moon grows during the next night or two, we shall get it. The Virginia creeper over the tanks has shed all its leaves and the vines are losing theirs very quickly now.

On Thursday afternoon last Dr Scholtz paid us his monthly visit. He was pleased with the improvement in my condition after our short holiday. He said my heart was decidedly in a better condition and blood pressure had gone up nearer to its normal condition – 160. He said it had been as low as 110. I told him he had never told me that. The lowest he had said was 130. His reply was we do not tell all our trade secrets! He does not think it necessary to come every month but of course will come if required. I notice quite a difference in breathing here to Uitenhage. So that's that.

Aunt Letty arrived on Thursday afternoon and is staying at the Poplars. We see her nearly every day. She is looking very well but is getting very deaf. Her hobby seems to be tatting. Most evenings she has supper with us and Mary and she takes her back to Ernest's.

Sunday last was S.S. anniversary and we all attended all three services. We are sorry to hear that Joe and practically the whole family are suffering from colds. Hope to hear better news from them before posting this.

Aunt Eliza and Joyce and Raymond were here yesterday afternoon and met Aunt Eliza here. Joyce had three letters from Dudley on Monday, the first she has had for a month. We had a letter from Norman from London and he says they are all safe so far. The letter was dated April 1st and said there had been less bombing for some time and they had been able to go to bed upstairs instead of sleeping in their clothes downstairs. Since April 1st, London has been heavily bombed again several times. Liverpool too has had several attacks and we wonder how Aunt Nellie has fared. When will this terrible war end? I still think it cannot go on much longer than the end of this year. Wednesday afternoon. No letters from any of the family today which is quite unusual. I hope all are well. I don't think I mentioned that Kathleen and her husband brought Aunt Letty over. We saw them for a few minutes before their return the next day. Am glad to say Kathleen is much better than she was a little while ago. The little evacuees afford them much amusement. Aunt Letty and Mary spend most evenings with us. Last evening we all played halma. Mom seems an expert at this game.

I have been spending a good deal of time lately arranging my pictures prior to pasting them into scrap books. I don't know when the job will be finished but it will be a very interesting collection when it is done.

The wart on my forehead has almost disappeared without any treatment. Doctor wanted to remove it if I went to his surgery. I still have the scar on my right hand from the sores which afflicted me some months ago. All the others have gone without leaving any mark. I hope this last one will do likewise. Our new glasses have arrived but neither of us notice any marked improvements in our vision.

We hope Reg is having a good holiday at the farm and that Dot had a happy birthday on Monday last.

I hope the apples have duly arrived. Ruth has acknowledged hers.

We registered 133 points of rain last month and only 9 the month of March. March according to our records is the wettest month of the year but won't be this year at any rate. We have plenty of water in our tanks to go on with.

I find that my paper slips when I get nearly to the bottom of the sheet so I must try in future not to use up to the very last line of the page. I do not know how I would get on with correspondence without the typewriter. Am glad to say we are both keeping very well.

Lots of love to all from
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Box 141. Cradock
Wednesday May 14th, 1941

My dear All,

It is 20 minutes to eight and our maid is just arriving. We have decided to make our breakfast hour half past eight so as to give her time to sweep the dining room and finish getting the breakfast ready. One has to make allowance for servants from the location coming late these cold mornings. The distance is over a mile and the sun does not rise here until after seven. I still get up about 6.30 and get the pots etc. going. I envy those who have their servant sleeping on the premises but we have not accommodation for such.

It is very nice sitting out on the back veranda before breakfast in the sun but it is decidedly nippy at times although we have not had any frost yet. We have not had a fire in the dining room either so far. Last year we had our first fire on May 1st.

Blodwen and Joe write about a nasty experience Blodwen had last week. It appears that they went for a spin and whilst sitting on the ground, a tick or some insect bit Blodwen on her thigh. She did not feel it at the time but for days after, she had to keep in bed and have the doctor who pronounced it tick fever. Her temperature went up to 101 and fluctuated a good deal. Joe had to stay home from work one day to help in keeping the home fires burning. She has suffered a good deal of pain with it but the last report was she was able to get up for part of the day. All of them, including Joe, have had colds.

Dot writes that she had a very happy birthday. She took four V.A.D.s to Pietersburg to see the war train and each of them did two hours duty. One of her boys went with her and the other went the next day with Mrs Watts. Reg was expected home from his holiday at the end of last week. We hope he has had a good time and his health improved. Dot says she weighs 114 lbs. There is still room for improvement in this respect.

Evelyn writes that her two sisters and her brother Frank have all been together for the first time for 27 years. It must have been a great pleasure to them all.

Grace took baby Charles to the S.S. anniversary service in the morning. Of course he did not keep still until he went to sleep. I well remember taking Harold to a similar service here in Cradock and had to take him out of the service. Jean sang a solo during their service.

I saw in the Stellalander that Kingsley and Cecily and Frank's children gave a concert on the farm in aid of war funds which brought in over £1, keep it up. I do not know where I heard it but I understand that the telephone line has been erected to Eric's farm. I have not heard if Douglas has it as well. It has been talked about for years past and would be a great convenience to all concerned. Evelyn says they are still trying to come to see us but cannot name the day. It is exactly five months to the day to our Golden Wedding. Today is also the anniversary of Ernest and Alison's wedding.

I have been spending a good deal of time lately in arranging my collection of photographs and pictures preparatory to sticking them into albums. It will be a most interesting collection when completed. I hope to send each of you some duplicates in due course. Aunt Eliza has unpacked a box full of old pictures, some of which my father had cut out of English papers many years ago and others from South African papers. She is giving me those that she does not want. My father had also started a scrap book (which I had never seen before) but unfortunately the binding of the book is damaged and he had used very thin paper for the book. The pictures are for the most part wood blocks, long before the reproduction of photographs.

I wonder if any of you remember the vacant piece of ground opposite our old home in New Stockenstroom Street. The elder children used to sit on the huge stones there and wait for the school bell to ring. A new house has just been built on the spot.

I find my space limit is up and as we have visitors coming this afternoon, so must stop.

With love to all from
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday May 21st, 1941

My dear All,

We have just said goodbye to Douglas, Evelyn and Rex who left at 7.15 a.m. for Kimberley. On Thursday afternoon last, we received a wire from them at Kimberley saying they were just leaving (2 p.m.) and expected to arrive on Friday. We rather expected they would be travelling via Rooispruit but early Friday morning, I received a phone message from Middelburg, saying they had slept there and might arrive about 9.30 that morning. Punctually to time, they did arrive and we were pleased to see them. They had had only coffee before starting so were ready for breakfast. They all looked well and had a comfortable journey down. They did not go to Rooispruit. On Saturday we all went out to Uncle Norman's for mid-day lunch and enjoyed a nice leg of venison amongst many other good things. Aunt Gladys is very lonely at times there but always glad to see visitors. Their youngest boy, Dick, is home for school holidays and has a friend with him. After a rest, we motored over to see Aunt Jessie and then back to town. Douglas was interested in seeing the old place.

I was down to take a service on Sunday morning but as a German minister, Pastor Luckhoff was in town delivering an address on Nazism in the Town Hall that evening, Mr Weavers got him to take my place. This enabled us to go out again to Fish River to attend their service and at the same time see a great number of old friends and relations, all of whom were pleased to see Douglas, Evelyn, Rex and ourselves. There were eleven extra to dinner at Saltpansdrift. We took the opportunity of discussing the Golden Wedding and Aunt Kate says she will be very pleased to do anything for the occasion. Douglas thinks it will be best to have a family gathering at Grass Ridge as most of the relations live about there and could easily come across if they wished so to do.

If all our family can come – as I hope they will – there will be about 30 all told. These can be scattered at nearby farms for sleeping. It is also suggested that the function might with advantage be held, say, a week earlier so as to take advantage of the school holidays. Will those concerned see if a week earlier will be suitable?

Of course they have seen Aunt Eliza and other friends. I was busy on Monday with Committee meetings but we have seen as much of each other as possible. Douglas still has some stomach trouble which I wish he could get rid of. Rex has grown a great deal and has seen something of his cousins in town. We wish they could have stayed over for the Fish River Fete tomorrow but they had planned to get back to Kimberley this evening so as to take Kingsley and Cecily home for the long weekend. They had hoped to be able to call at Rooispruit on the return trip but found the time did not allow. Rex did all the driving whilst here and most of the journey down.

Grace writes that Ted has been busy on census work and found it rather more than he expected. I hope he is well paid for services rendered.

Joe and family seem to all be better, for which we are thankful. He says baby recognised the boarding house where we stayed and at once called out for Grandma. He evidently has a good memory.

We are going to the Fish River Fete in the morning. Olive very kindly is taking us and her father. Hope it will be a fine day. On Saturday, the Sunday School have their picnic. I suppose we shall get a chance of going out for an hour or so. I would rather spend the time working on my scrap books. The job of pasting them into books is about to begin. I have finished cutting them out for the time being. Aunt Eliza has a lot more to look through yet.

Later. I guess Douglas and Co are nearly at Kimberley. We miss them a lot today.

The war news is not too cheerful the last few days but there can only be one ending to it all.

No letter from Grace so far this week but hope alls well there.

Lots of love to each and all, from

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Box 141, Cradock
Wednesday May 28th, 1941

My dear All,

Fifty four years ago yesterday I arrived in Cradock and here I am, comparatively an old man, enjoying a reasonable amount of good health and still able to put in a day's work. For these and all other mercies, I am very thankful. I am fully conscious of many shortcomings and failures but I am still trying to do my best and hope to leave this world, when the time comes, a better world than when I arrived in this country.

The principal event of the past week was the Fish River Fete last Thursday. It would have been nice if Douglas and family could have stayed over for it but we were very pleased that he had seen some of the relations at the service the Sunday before. Uncle Walter and Olive took us in their car, together with Miss Loscombe. There were not as many at the Fete as last year owing to so many young people being away on active service. This affected the recreational side of the day most of all as no tennis could be arranged. The usual assortment of good things were on sale and after the opening speeches, were quickly bought up. We got a leg of springbok, butter etc. I also got a supply for Mrs Derecourt. The lunch was a great feature as usual. Joyce and Raymond went out with Alison and Joan at the wheel. Joyce took a 1/- ticket for a dressed turkey complete with a splendid assortment of vegetables for which lots were drawn and the lot fell upon her. Needless to say, Aunt Eliza was very pleased when they arrived back with the goods. It turned out a beautiful bird and she says she has never tasted such a tender one. Mr Thomas does not eat turkey but enjoyed a taste of venison we sent up. Nelly Rickett (Bowley) and her husband and children were there and we hope they will come and see us before they return to East London.

On Friday we received a wire from Douglas from Vryburg reporting their safe arrival. By mistake, he went off with my hat and left his new one on the rack. I have since returned his and told him to keep mine as well as I have another. They picked up Kingsley and Cecily on their way through Kimberley for the long weekend. Evelyn has since sent us a nice enlargement of their house and garden. When we were last there, there was no garden at all.

Saturday was a holiday and the Sunday School picnic but as the weather had turned very cold and not having a car, we did not make any arrangements to go to it but the children, we understand, enjoyed themselves.

Mary went to Port Elizabeth on Friday night to attend Friends meeting. She was due back last evening but we have not seen her yet. Aunt Letty is looking to return to Graaff Reinet on Friday with Kathleen and husband and the two evacuee children. They are to spend the night with us and we are looking forward with much interest in seeing them all. They have been spending a week at Fish River.

We have had letters from each home this week. Evelyn reports that they reached Kimberley at 2.15 p.m. and home the same evening at 9.30. They left here at 7.15 a.m. That was good going. Found everything in order on arrival.

Grace writes that she likes the idea of having the celebrations at Grass Ridge and that the four households provide a wedding cake. As to the date, she says Ted is applying for a month's holiday from 13th so as to be able to attend his parents' Golden Wedding on November 13th. She thinks a week earlier would be alright. Ted and Grace and baby would probably stay with us after the Wedding for a while, the big children going back to be under the care of Miss Hicks.

Joe took an extra day or so off and went on a few trips, including one to Grahamstown. They saw Ruth for about half an hour as she had another engagement to keep. No mention of Blodwen's "incident" so hope she has quite recovered from the tic bite. Dot says that Alan has scarlet fever but is doing well. She hopes Norman will get it and so be over the trouble soon. Their school breaks up on October 3rd so, having the function a week early would suit them nicely. She wonders if Aunt Eliza and Emmie would be able to attend if held at Grass Ridge. She went with others to see Field Marshall Smuts and did duty in the W.A. She has sent us a box of avocado pears which are very acceptable. We have never seen such large ones.

Much love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday June 4th, 1941

My dear All,

Since my last letter, we have had the pleasure of a visit from Kathleen and her husband "Boy" Vorster, together with their two little evacuee girls, both about five years old. They arrived in time for dinner on Thursday last and spent the rest of the day and night with us and left again about nine on Friday morning. They had been spending a week or so at Fish River. Uncle Gervase wants to sell a portion of his farm and Boy wanted to have a look at it. We were very pleased with the two little girls, they are very well behaved and are sweet little things. They were delighted with the swing and I wished we had a camera to have taken some snaps of them both together on the swing. Aunt Eliza, Joyce and Raymond came down to see them and Aunt Letty was also here during the day. Of course they say I spoil them but I don't think so. Of course we took them to the park to see the animals and the swings. Aunt Letty has returned with them to Graaff Reinet.

On Sunday afternoon we had a surprise visit from Maisie and Charles Merrifield and their two children and nurse girl. They had left Port Elizabeth by car in the morning and arrived here about 3.30. They left again about five for a rest farm near Tarkastad where they are spending a holiday. They are coming over here again this afternoon and will spend the night with us. Mr Merrifield has not been well for some time and the eldest child suffers from asthma and their doctor advises his coming up country. It is very nice to have them. They saw Joe and Blodwen on Saturday and report that they all have bad colds.

Blodwen has had trouble with their servant that they brought from Bloemfontein and she created quite a scene one day. She had to call in the police. They have now sent her back to Bloemfontein. We understand the girl was very lonely not knowing the language of the local natives.

Uncle Walter fell in his house a few days ago and Olive had great difficulty in getting him up again. There was no one to help her, the day being a holiday.

We have had some trouble with our servant. Mom understood her to have given notice at the beginning of May but she denied it. We had already engaged our old boy John, whom we had at Rockcliff and he was to have commenced on Sunday June 1st. He did not turn up and we have not seen or heard of him since so for Monday and Tuesday, we were without any help. Our old servant who left about Xmas time owing to the arrival of a baby – has come back for the present and so that eases the situation. To make matters worse, Mom was taken ill during last night and is now on a starvation diet. I hope she will be better before I post this. Aunt Nelly near Liverpool has had an incendiary bomb dropped near her bungalow but fortunately they always keep sand and water handy and so extinguished it before it could do any damage. Aunt Emmie has experienced a flood and gale at Cape Town last week. We hear she nearly had an accident but the letter containing the news has apparently been lost. Joyce thinks that a tree in her grounds must have fallen near her.

Ruth reports that Milner had been down for a fortnight's leave and has since returned to Pretoria. He is being transferred to the Air Force. He has been all through Abyssinia. Dudley Townshend writes very interesting letters on his experiences in that country. Denis is going to Potchefstroom for a month's training during the June vacation. Hope we shall see him as he passes through.

Dorothy sent us a box of five avocado pears last week. They are the largest and best we have ever seen. I do not know if they were grown in her own garden. We both like them very much. Incidentally, they save me taking medicine. Mary also enjoys them and wishes her thanks to be conveyed for them.

Later. Letters from Grace and Dot to hand. Grace says they have had a cold snap and have bought a fire stove for their dining room so the children can do their study there in the evenings. Dot says Alan is getting on nicely after scarlet fever. Perhaps Norman may get it too.

I have filled five scrap books so far and expect there will be a few more to do before I have finished. It is very interesting work but one gets rather tired. We had Friends in last evening for reading. I see the paper is going crooked so must stop. Lots of love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
Wednesday June 11th, 1941

My dear All,

What a time we have had with wind the last few days. It has been like August weather. Some nights have been cold but the wind has been most unseasonable. However it has removed most of the leaves from the vines and other trees and the garden looks very untidy at present. In ten days time we pass the shortest day and the middle of winter. We have a fire in the dining room most evenings.

Maisie and Mr Merrifield arrived last Thursday in time for dinner and we enjoyed their company very much. We had prepared accommodation for the two children and nurse girl but they left them on the rest farm where they are spending their holiday near Tarkastad. Charles had some plans and specifications to complete and get off and posted them from here. Now they will be able to enjoy the rest of their holiday. They are charmed with the farm they are staying on. This is their first visit to Cradock and we hope it will not be the last. They have their own car so will be able to get about freely. They were surprised at the size of Cradock and think it is a nice clean town. They were surprised that they were able to get certain lines in shopping that they wanted. Naturally I impressed upon them that this being the capital of the Midlands, they could get anything. This is the first time they have ever been separated from their children. We have had a phone conversation with them since and glad to know they were alright. They look to come again before returning to Port Elizabeth.

We are sorry to hear that Joe and Blodwen have had some anxiety over Trevor. It appears that he was playing with a rag that Roy had been using for cleaning with Brasso. Trevor put the rag up his sleeve and went to bed with it. During the night he complained of being sore. In the morning they found the acid in the Brasso had caused quite a nasty place on his arm. Poor child. He is better now I am glad to say. Maisie has given Roy their son's bike. Needless to say Roy is thrilled. He is not allowed to ride in the streets yet. Joe is still working overtime and gets very tired but the extra money of course comes in useful. They have had a lot of extra expense in moving.

On Friday evening Mom and I went to a concert in the Town Hall on behalf of war funds. By mistake we went up an hour too soon and it was not worthwhile going home again so we chatted to one and another. The series of tableaux were wonderfully well arranged. They reminded me of an effort we made in 1888 for the church but it was nothing as good as this effort.

We hear that the men of the local defence force have at last left for the north – Egypt no doubt. Many of the parents, husbands and sweethearts have gone to Maritzburg and Durban to see them off. It is to be hoped that they may all come back safe and sound.

After supper last evening we had a surprise visit from Harry Collett and his wife and daughter-in-law. They were on their way to Queenstown to see Ellie's brother in a nursing home and their car broke down a few miles out of town so they came here for the night. The daughter-in-law lives in Benoni. I think her husband is at the front. Harry and I went along to see Uncle Walter. We enjoyed their company and expect them to break their journey on their way back.

I have now completed five of my scrap books and have started on the 6th. They are very interesting to me and I hope others will also like to see them. I shall have enough pictures to do a few more books. I bought six postcard albums cheaply and they do very well for the purpose.

Letters from Evelyn, Grace and Dot also to hand this week. Norman is now in quarantine but otherwise all seems to be well.

Later. I have been up town but the wind is too strong for me and I came home somewhat exhausted but will have a rest before finishing my letter. I see the sheet is full so I must stop.

Love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday June 19th, 1941

My dear All,

I have a long Committee meeting to attend this morning so must get a move on. It is pretty cold work typing early in the morning but I find it the best time to write. We have had sharp frosts for the last few nights and rather less wind.

Last Friday at dinner time we received a wire saying that cousin Dora Forbes passed away during the night and the funeral would be on Saturday morning. Mrs Forbes is sister to Harry Collett who had spent a night with us on his way to Queenstown. So I got into touch with the doctor at Queenstown and found that his brother-in-law had gone home the day before so I got in touch with the family there. We had been expecting Harry and his wife and daughter-in-law to return this way but instead he decided to go right on to Burgersdorp for the funeral. We are so glad that we had Dora with us for a few days last year when we went to the Mayoral Congress at Burgersdorp. We have not heard any particulars since but we know she had been an invalid for some years. The same afternoon, whilst I was attending the Hospital Board meeting, the Rev Mackenzie told me a car bearing a Vryburg mark had stopped him to enquire where we lived. He said there was a lady and gent and a child in the car but they did not mention any name. Mom was also out that afternoon and we are wondering who it could have been. No card or name was left. We are always glad to see any visitors. Perhaps Douglas will be able to find out who it was.

We have had a card from Mr and Mrs Robb (Miss Geard) from Rhodesia thanking us for the congratulations on their marriage.

Grace has written specially stating that Ted leaves on 22nd for a month special training in wireless at Kimberley and this may mean that they may be leaving Kroonstad. Grace says in any case she would not go until the end of the year on account of the children's education. So we may expect to hear of changes in that quarter. Seven years ago when Ted passed into the first grade, he wired that it would probably mean changes so at last they may come about. We shall wait and see with interest.

Blodwen writes that Joe seems in a very poor state of health and wondering what can be done. The children and herself have bad colds and with them having three weeks holiday from this week, she does not know how they will get on. The servant they brought with them from Bloemfontein has given no end of trouble and had to be sent back. The new girl they have got only stays for the morning work. We have suggested that either Roy or Merle come to us for the holidays. (Must stop for breakfast). Later. Am feeling fed up after a good breakfast.

Grace reports that Miss Hicks has volunteered for active service. If she is accepted, Grace will miss her very considerably.

Our eldest grandchild, Arthur, celebrates his 21st anniversary on 22nd and our youngest grandchild his second birthday the same day. Baby Charles will miss his daddy very much and he leaves for training the same day. Did I tell you that when Aunt Letty and the others with her left for Graaff Reinet, they encountered snow on top of the mountains between here and Graaff Reinet. The evacuee children wanted to get out of the car and make a snowman as is frequently done in England.

Mary is leaving tomorrow to keep house for Mr Addis Smith in Port Elizabeth whilst his wife goes away for a holiday with their son who has not been very well. We shall miss her very much.

The last few days I have been troubled with chaps on my heel. I hope they will soon heal.

Gladys' Alan is arriving Saturday evening to spend his holidays with Aunt Eliza, Joyce and Raymond. Raymond has now passed his 6th year and will be going to school next quarter. We have three invitations to weddings for next year. We shall attend two of them. I have eight scrap books almost completed. I may be going to East London on July 1st to represent the Council on the Race Relations Conference. It will be decided next Tuesday evening. All well here.

Lots of love to each and all from
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141.
Wednesday June 25th, 1941.

My dear All,

We were surprised to hear from Douglas last Friday that he was in Johannesburg for an operation on his eye that was damaged some years ago whilst trucking some cattle. I at once notified all the family and I hope you have written to him. We had a wire on Saturday saying he was doing well and hope to hear again before long. I post this hoping that he is still getting on nicely and will soon be able to go home. Len Ambler was with him. It is to be hoped that he will be able to see better than before. As he says, both Arthur and Rex have signed on for active service, so he will need good eyesight to carry on the numerous farm and other interests that he has on hand. Unfortunately we do not get our post until late in the morning and I generally start my letter on Tuesday or early Wednesday morning and I like to post early so as to catch the evening mail. This afternoon we are attending the marriage of the minister of the Baptist Church so that will take up some precious time.

We are also anxious about Joe. As I said last week, we have asked them to send one of the children to us for the three weeks school holidays and had hoped to have heard ere this what plans they were making. Suppose we shall get news this morning so I must leave further comment for the present.

No doubt we shall hear from Grace today that Ted has gone to Kimberley so there seems to be changes in three of the families. There is also news that Dennis passing through to Potchefstroom in the morning for a month's training in the officers corps. Shall try to see him as he passes.

Saturday – or perhaps it was Friday evening – I contracted a nasty cold, my nose running and coughing a good deal. However by turning in early and getting up late on Sunday, I am glad to say it is passing over. We attended the marriage of the ex Mayor's eldest daughter on Monday afternoon. It was a big affair. The ex mayor is a very strong leader in the Nationalist Party but his daughter is marrying an Englishman. I wish there were more such unions as I feel confident they would contribute materially to solving the vexing racial problem in this country.

The Town Council last evening appointed me to represent them at East London next week at a conference on Race Relationships. I expect to leave here on Friday evening and shall be away for nearly a week if I stay to the end of the conference. Mom will stay here or may go to Fish River. At the end of June I may go to the Synod at Uitenhage.

Gladys' son, Alan, arrived at Aunt Eliza's on Saturday night for the three weeks holiday. He has grown quite a big boy during the last few years. Gladys has gone to East London for a holiday and I expect to see her as she is staying in the same street. Raymond has been put into long trousers as the weather is so cold. He and his mother and Alan had supper with us last evening. Aunt Eliza has been troubled with rats in the house for some time. Lately she missed a jug cover which she has over the milk on a table by her bedside. Joyce heard the beads on the jug cover during the night and thought Auntie was helping herself. No trace of the cover has yet been found. It is assumed that the rat has run away with it. They do do such things. I think we have got the better of the same trouble in this house.

I am busy completing my ninth scrap album. I have not nearly finished all the pictures I want to stick in. Must stop for breakfast. Later. Two notes from Douglas. He is getting on nicely. Will be out of Nursing Home by the time you get this and will be staying with the Amblers. He has to see the doctor twice a week for two or three weeks. Expects Evelyn will be up shortly to see him. Joe writes that he is working as foreman for two weeks whilst the regular man is away. He thinks if he could get away on active service for a year, he would be set up so far as health goes. He does not refer to our suggestion that one of the children should come to us for the holidays so I expect Mom will go to Fish River for a few days.

Later. A letter from Blodwen has since come to hand. The children will not be able to come. Douglas' address is 195 Blackwood Street, Pretoria, write to him. I have just come from the wedding. Aunt Jessie is here and will stay a few days. Paper is full. Lots of love, Dad

King George Private Hotel, East London
as Wednesday July 3rd, 1941.

My dear All,

I am writing from East London and it is Sunday afternoon. I do not know how long I shall be here but anticipate I may not have much time for letter writing so will make a start and add as I have opportunity.

In my last I think I told you of this trip coming off. I developed a nasty cold (I never knew of a nice one) but it seemed to be easing off a little before I left home. Mom and Aunt Jessie did not want me to go but having been appointed, I felt that I should and hoped the change would not do me any harm. The train was an hour and half late in starting – 11.30 p.m. Had a compartment to myself all the way and managed to sleep fairly well. Norma Watson (Rickett) was at Alice station to see me for the few minutes the train waited. Arrived here to time. Have a nice comfortable room on the ground floor. Very quiet. Mr Pool and his maiden sister are both staying here. Sister Collett is not living here as she found the work too hard for her but is staying at another boarding house close by and comes over frequently and plays with baby and takes him out for walks etc. In the afternoon, we went down to the beach but it was too cold for anyone to bathe but it was quite refreshing to see the sea again. On the way back we called to see Mr Immelman – former bank manager at Cradock who has come to live here on account of heart trouble. He was out but no doubt shall run across him before I return. Honor Biggs was also in East London so called at her hotel – just opposite Tenby House where we stayed on our last trip. Found she had left for Port Elizabeth that morning. Whilst we were waiting, whilst the hall porter was making enquiries, in walked Gladys Webster, also on the same errand. I had previously tried to find Gladys who is staying in the same street here but had forgotten the address. We came back early as it was getting cold and threatening for rain. A little fell during the evening and night. Was introduced to some of the residents in the lounge and spent the evening in conversation. Most of the ladies were doing knitting. Retired early after a warm bath and am glad to say my cold is no worse – in fact rather better for the change. I am very glad Mom put my hot water bottle in my luggage.

It is now Wednesday morning July 2nd. The last two days have been very fully occupied. The hours of Conference have been 9.15 to one and 2.15 to 5.30 and eight to ten or later. Today we are sitting all the morning and in the afternoon are inspecting the sub-economic houses the Municipality are building in the location for natives. I leave for home tomorrow afternoon arriving on Friday morning. I should have liked to have stayed longer as there has not been time to see my friends with one exception. The exception was the Halses. As Edith and I came out of church on Sunday evening, we found that Maude Halse and her daughter were sitting in the same seat. Mrs Halse had not gone out owing to bad weather. They pressed me to come and see them so after the meeting was over yesterday afternoon, they came for me and I had supper with them before going to the evening session. They have taken a house at Vincent for twelve months and are very comfortable there. The little girl we saw last October is much better. They enquired after all the family.

The weather the last two days has been perfect as anyone need wish for. They do not get frost here. The climate is very mild. I cannot do more this week than apologise for the brevity of this letter and fear it is not very interesting but will try to do better next time. Lots of love and hoping you are all well and that I shall find all in order on my return tomorrow.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Craddock. Box 141.
Wednesday July 9th, 1941.

My dear All,

Back home again after an enjoyable few days at East London. It was my intention to leave there on Thursday afternoon but I overlooked the fact that there is no train that day so had to leave on Friday and arrived here nearly two hours late (9.30) a.m. I had wired to Mom at Fish River and she came in by train which was three hours late, arriving just before dinner. The maid had been when I arrived but gone home again so I sent the garden boy to fetch her. We found everything alright in the house and have dropped into our regular routine as usual. The weather in East London the last few days was very nice. People were enjoying sea bathing and being holiday time, there were a large number of visitors.

I ascertained that John Shingler was doing Y.M.C.A. and Toc H work somewhere in Kenya, Una still being at Fish Hoek. I called on Mrs Watson, the people we stayed with after leaving Tenby Hotel. Mrs was out but the elderly lady who lived there was pleased to see me. It was nice seeing Gladys there. She showed me over the flat her friends are living in and it was certainly a very comfortable and compact accommodation. Rent £8/10/- per month, including electric stove, frig and hot and cold water system.

The only free afternoon I had, I took Nurse Edith to the bio to see "Boys Town". It was very good indeed and I understand it is based on actual fact. I recommend anyone to see it if you have the chance. I had an evening meal with Mrs Halse and Maude and her two children. They are living at Cambridge having taken a house for a year. They seem very comfortable. Cambridge and Vincent townships are to be merged into East London Municipalities at the end of this year. I also saw Schroder at his business place and he says old Mr Sowden is bearing up bravely after the death of his wife a few months ago.

I can notice the days getting appreciably longer. Have not had the vines pruned yet but must see about it this month. The man who has done them ever since we came into the house is now away at the front.

Have seen Aunt Eliza since my return. She is keeping well but her walking ability is not as good as it used to be. Perhaps when the warmer weather comes it will be better. Joyce, Raymond and Alan had dinner with us yesterday. Alan returns to Cape Town on Saturday. Raymond goes to school from this quarter at Rocklands. Mr Stock and Uncle Dudley and Aunt Katie also called yesterday afternoon. Aunt Katie says they will be pleased to have the Golden Wedding celebration at Grass Ridge if we would like it so. They could accommodate we two and Douglas and family and know the other members of the family could be fixed up at different homes in the neighbourhood. We think it will be a good plan to have the function say, on October 7th instead of 14th so as to bring it in the school holidays. They would have the wagon-house cleared out and done up (we were married in the wagon-house). You must let us know what each is able to do in the matter. Who will be able to come and when. Of course now that Arthur and Rex and Ted have signed on for active service, it may be that some will not be able to come. Naturally we should like it to be a fully united gathering but that may not be possible. Think it over as there is only three months still to go.

We are glad to hear that Douglas' op has been so successful. Expect to hear today when he will be able to go back home. Blodwen has been laid up again. Roy and Merle have gone to Maisie so as to ease the work at home. We have suggested that when Blodwen is able to take a change, that she should come to us.

We are very sorry to hear that Dot's Alan has contracted measles. He has been having a rough time for several weeks lately. We wish we could be of some service to them. We wish they would come here for a change. (Stop for breakfast). News from England states that all our relations so far are safe for which we are very thankful.

Later. Letter from Grace says she is expecting Ted home at the end of next week. Pam is not well and may go to Bloemfontein to see a specialist when Ted returns. Mr Metcalf, Douglas' neighbour, called this a.m. reports all well on the farm. Lots of love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141.
Wednesday July 16th, 1941.

My dear All,

The news today is that Douglas is safely home again after his operation which the doctor says is perfectly satisfactory. We may all be very thankful for this. He has not yet got the new glasses which will be necessary but they will be ready in a few weeks time. He got home a few days before the children had to return to school so he saw something of them. Rex is to report for duty at Kimberley on Monday 21st but Arthur is staying at home until Douglas' glasses are fixed up. Arthur is going to the armoured train section and Rex to the mechanical service.

Ted has completed his month's course of wireless training at the end of this week and is expected back in Kroonstad on Monday. He hopes to get to Douglas before returning. He has seen Eric who, by the way, has been in hospital with a touch of flu. Gladys' Keith has been spending the holidays at Hollowdene with Pat and has contracted scarlet fever in a very mild form. Pat is returning to Cape Town to complete this year's schooling. Freda was expected at Rooispruit for a holiday but I expect this has had to be put off owing to Keith's illness.

Grace's Pam has not been well, nasal trouble I think, and may be going to Bloemfontein to consult a specialist. Otherwise the family seem to be alright.

Poor little Alan, after getting over scarlet fever, has contracted measles. I do not know what will be the next thing he can get. Dot has a large long dose of nursing. She reports that a building boom is in progress in Potgietersrus, 16 new houses are at present being erected.

Blodwen still has trouble with her thumb and has not been well for some time. The two children spent part of the holidays with her sister in Port Elizabeth and seem to have had a right royal time. It is rumoured that the foreman who gave Joe so much trouble in Bloemfontein may be transferred to Uitenhage. This is not a nice outlook for Joe if it should materialise. We will hope for the best. Their doctor has advised them to get a house higher up in the town as he thinks this one they are in is damp.

I do not think I have told you of the accident which befell Rev and Mrs Weavers on their holiday. They left by car for Roberts Heights to see their eldest son and at Reddersburg, near Bloemfontein, the car overturned as the result of a tyre bursting. They were all taken to Bloemfontein Hospital. Mrs Weavers broke a collarbone and Mr Weavers was severely cut about the face and one knee damaged and left arm badly bruised. He is still in hospital and is getting better. Mrs Weavers is with friends. We do not know when they will be back. It might have been much more serious.

Very welcome rain fell on Saturday night and Sunday measuring nearly an inch. Farmers are rejoicing that their crops will be saved.

There are no further developments re the Golden Wedding. Let us know who can come and when. October 6th is a public holiday. Schools in the Cape Province reopen on Tuesday 7th. It would therefore appear that children will have to miss a few days of schooling in any case if we meet for 7th or 14th. When we know for certain when it is to be, we will make all the arrangements where each will stay. Of course, it must be understood that we shall be glad for all to stay as long as you can, not just only for the day. We understand that Ruth and husband and Denis will try to come as well. Everyone will be welcome.

Later. Letters from Grace and Dot to hand. Pam is having treatment and seems rather better. Alan is out of quarantine. Dot says they will be here.

Our vines are being pruned today and hope they yield good fruit. The man who usually prunes them is at the front. We had a surprise visit from Mr Watts, next door neighbour to Reg and Dot. They had afternoon tea with us and I took them round the mountain drive. They left for Johannesburg about 3. The weather is decidedly warmer today. Can do with more rain soon.

Must stop now, lots of love to all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock.
Wednesday July 23rd 1941

My dear All,

A very dull morning and it looks as though we may get some more rain. It will be very welcome if it does come. As a matter of interest, I should have stated that last week when we had nearly an inch on Sunday, it was so dark in the morning that we had to have the electric lights on at breakfast time and when we went to church, they had to switch on the lights for the 11 o'clock service. Our rainfall for this year is much below the average so far.

Yesterday Uncle James would have reached his 86th year had he lived.

On Monday evening we had a surprise visit from Nurse Elsie Wookey. She had been down to Port Alfred on a visit to old Mrs Fincham and the Browns at Somerset East. We should have been glad to have put her up but as she was leaving the next morning by train for Groenkloof, she stayed at the hotel. However she may come and see us before returning to Vryburg. She was glad to hear that Douglas' operation had been such a success and we were interested in hearing all the news of our Vryburg friends. She was sorry that Matron was not in town.

Uncle Jack and Enid were in for a few minutes yesterday and Aunt Jessie had dinner with us. Am glad to say she is much better than when she came to town last. Uncle Norman has taken his youngest son from Kingswood to help him on the farm. His three elder boys are already in Egypt. Mr Barnes, his overseer is still in hospital but is getting better but will not be fit for much work for some time yet.

We are sorry to hear that Freda has all the children down with measles at the farm. Gladys' Keith is with them and of course Pat is held back from attending school on account of the infection.

The Weavers were expected back for services at Fish River and were in town for Sunday last but acting on doctor's advice, they are staying a week longer. At short notice I was asked to conduct the evening service. They look to be back next Sunday. They have had a very severe shaking.

At the Town Council meeting last evening, I was deputed with others to go to Queenstown next month for a government conference. Shall not be away more than a day I expect.

Last week, I received a nice mounted photo of the opening of the hall at Rhodes University last April. They also sent sufficient money to cover the cost of suitably framing it. So I have incorporated in the same frame the silver key they presented me with. It looks very nice.

Ruth writes that Milner is stationed at Port Elizabeth now and is able to run up to Grahamstown for weekends sometimes. All his family are now in Grahamstown. Dick has left the job he had and is in Somerset East now. Denis is in hospital at Potchefstroom with flu. He returns to Grahamstown next week. Ted is home again. He passed his exam and we now await further developments. Pam, we hope, is getting better. The two boys were left in charge of baby Charles whilst the others went to the Delville Wood service. Dot as usual is very busy with Red Cross work etc. Their town has done wonderfully well in war work.

I am busy finishing off my eleventh scrap book but I have not nearly finished all I want to do. My next job is to tackle the family photos.

I suppose it is too soon for you to say who will be able to come in October. I think you had better let us make all the arrangements as to where each is to stay.

We are both better of our colds. We notice the days are getting appreciably longer. It is quite mild again today.

Uncle Bertie's son is engaged again. This time he is to marry one of Mr Leonard's daughters from Katkop. Ernest's son and his wife have been down on leave. We saw them for a few minutes before they returned. It is not settled if I am to go to Uitenhage next week but in any case, it will only be for a few days. Mom had the Womens Auxiliary here on Monday afternoon to tea.

Lots of love to each and all from
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
Wednesday July 30th, 1941.

My dear All,

The usual Wednesday morning pleasure is to have a chat with dear ones far away. It is not so cold but I am glad to have a nice pair of mittens on. The weather has been very blowy during the week and no rain has fallen. As a matter of fact, we do not expect much during the winter months. We still have plenty of water in our tanks.

We have had two very pleasant surprise visits during the past week. Nurse Elsie Wookey dropped in just after our evening meal and stayed for a couple of hours or so. She has been on a visit to old Mrs Fincham at Port Alfred and broke her journey at Somerset East and here on her way back to Vryburg. We are sorry she did not come straight to us but as she was going on the next morning to spend a few days with Hilda George at Groenkloof, she did not think it worthwhile. However, we enjoyed her visit very much. She was able to give us a good deal of interesting information about our old Vryburg friends. She was in a hurry to get home as her brother, Frank, was going up on his holiday. She was glad to know that Douglas' operation had been so successful. Then on Friday afternoon, who should drop in but Dossie de Kock from Durban with her sister-in-law, Mrs Max de Kock. Her husband did not come as he was playing bowls. Dossie is just the same loving affectionate girl as ever. She has not altered at all – except that she has got older. She was so interested in hearing of you all and recalling the hold happy days at Vryburg. She could not stay long as having lived here in early married life, she had a lot of friends to see and they were off the next morning for home – Durban. These visits are a great joy to us. I was busy at the time with my scrap books and she was interested in seeing some of the photos. I am hoping to have these all arranged and put into albums before the Golden Wedding.

The Mayor was out of town on Delville Wood Day so asked me to lay the wreath on the Cenotaph at the afternoon function. I have had the photos of the opening of Rhodes Dining Hall framed and inserted the silver key in the same frame. It looks very nice.

I am glad to say that the last scar on my hand has now disappeared after so many months. I still think it was the effect of the doctor's medicine that brought them out. I hope they never come again. By the way, Doctor Scholtz is in hospital with a poisoned hand. Mr Barnes has gone back to Fish River. He is far from strong. We are thinking of going out for the long weekend as it seems I shall not be going to Synod at Uitenhage. The party for whom I am to substitute has not let me know if he is going or not.

Mary has been away just about a week and is expected back tonight. We miss her visits very much.

Joe is the first one to reply about coming to the Golden wedding. He says he hopes all his family will be able to come. So do we. Perhaps today we will hear from others. A fresh difficulty has arisen. The Toc H are holding their annual congress here over the long weekend in October and expect the town to provide hospitality for the visitors. In the usual course of events, we should be able to put up four or five but now it clashes with our plans so I suppose we shall have to disappoint our Toc H friends.

The Weavers returned on Sunday afternoon after having service at Fish River. They both seem better than we expected but it is quite evident they have had a nasty shaking. He has left for Synod but should not have gone I think. It will take some time before they are quite over the shock.

Ernest has gone to Press Congress at Johannesburg this morning. He will be away for a week or so. Later. Letter from Grace says she hopes all the family will be able to come in October. The children will have to return as soon as possible for school but she and Ted could stay longer, if Ted is able to get his leave. For some things I can see it will be easier to have whatever function here in town rather than the country but will give further consideration when we hear from the rest of the circle. Nothing from Douglas or Dot this week so far.

Los of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
Thursday August 7th, 1941

My dear All,

I must apologise for being late with my usual epistle. The fact of the matter is that last week I was not feeling at all well. The old trouble for which I was operated on four years ago returned and I was feeling pretty miserable. Mom suggested a change to the country and as we ascertained from Fish River that Uncle Dudley was coming into town on Friday, we asked him to take us back with him. We thought we would stay over the long weekend but as they had to come to town today, we stayed longer than expected. However we are glad that we did as I am feeling much better. Of course I took some work to do but did not take the typewriter, otherwise I might have written as usual.

After this somewhat lengthy apology, I may say that we enjoyed the rest and quiet very much. We were the only visitors. I took three of my scrap books with me and during the time, have indexed them. They have enjoyed looking at the collection and want to see more of them. I hope to have all of them as well as the family photos finished by the time of the Golden Wedding. Whilst I think of it, we discussed this forthcoming event. Aunt Katie agrees with us that it will be far easier for all concerned to have it in town instead of at Grass Ridge. Then we have also decided that instead of having two affairs, we will stick to the proper date (October 14th). So please all of you book that for certain. Douglas in his letter to hand today says that as many as can get leave will come from there. He will probably be getting a new car by then. Grace says they will try to come, all of them. Ted has applied for a month's leave so as to be able to attend ours and his parents' Golden Wedding which falls in that month. They will come by train. Joe hopes to get a week's leave and they too may come by car but as he gets a substantial concession on the S.A.R., may take advantage of that. At present he is working overtime. By the way, he says he sees very little of the children now. He is away in the morning whilst they are all asleep and when he comes home to dinner, Roy and Merle are still at school. When on overtime work, he does not get home till about eight and they are often in bed by then. I am very glad he has the car and can get out into the country on Saturday afternoons etc. Dot has said that they hope to come but we have not heard if by train or car. When in Grahamstown last, Ruth said they would all try to come if only for the day. So much for that item of news.

Whilst at Grass Ridge, two R.A.F. young men who are on holiday at Groen-Kloof, rode over to see Uncle and Aunt for morning tea. They are recently out from England and farmers in the district have been entertaining some of those who have been granted leave. They had never been on horseback before. One of them rode the white horse Olive lent for General Smuts to ride some years ago when he visited Cradock. We told them that they should feel highly honoured. One was from Dalston and of course knew Debeauvoir Road where I lived before coming to South Africa. He tells me that the church at the corner has been pulled down and that a number of bombs have fallen in the neighbourhood. He knows Hoxton and Stafford Allen and Sons' place in Cowper Street where I used to work. He gave me his home address. On Monday we went to Baroda where the farmers held a fete on behalf of war funds. It was a very blowy day, the dust was most unpleasant and I got very tired before we got back to Grass Ridge. There were two other R.A.F. men who were being entertained by Harvey Brown and of course I talked to them. One named Hurtnell lived at Gratton Flemming and knew Lansdown and Goodleigh and had been to Dean farm. His mother's name was Gill. I wonder if Aunt Eliza or Emmie remember the name. They belonged to the Wesleyan Church in Barnstaple. He showed me photos of his parents and his girl. Truly the world is very small. He seemed so pleased to see someone who knew his part of the country. The fete was a financial success, over £50 being taken. We had lunch consisting of braaivleis, pancakes etc. and dust. Lots of the relations were there and it was nice to see such harmony between the English and Afrikaaners.

We had a fire each evening and needed them. The weather was cold most of the time. We walked up to the cemetery and just about the homestead.

One morning five aeroplanes flew over the farm but I could not see either of them. Later three passed back again. Presumably they were from the Queenstown School of Flying out for practice.

Ernest Saunders has gone on service so Uncle has a Dutch family over the river. We did not see anything of them.

We tried to prove a statement that there are periods of daylight when an object casts a shadow exactly the same height as itself. Try it for yourselves. Take a stick – I used my walking stick – and stand it perpendicular after marking on the ground its exact height – and you will find that at a few minutes to twelve, the shadow corresponds with the height. By this means, you can measure the height of trees or mountains or anything else.

Mr Barnes is back on the farm at Saltpond and seems much better. Uncle Norman has taken his son, Dick, away from Kingswood School to help him on the farm. They have had letters from their boys in Egypt. They all complain of the dirtiness of the natives in that part of the world. They say they would rather sleep in kaffir huts here than in the native houses up north.

We found everything in order when we got back just before dinner. We called at Aunt Jessie's on the way in and also at Retreat. Uncle Jack was just back from a visit to his brother, Jim, and reports them all well there. Part of the journey he did in a goods train much to his disgust.

There is a nice batch of letters on our arrival but I cannot stop to answer them now but will do so as soon as I can.

Uncle Dudley has developed a bilious attack since his arrival and perhaps they may spend the night here.

I must not stop to write more now but will do so as soon as I can.

Very glad of all your letter.

Much love to each and all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday August 13th, 1941

My dear All,

Time is passing very quickly and we shall have October here before some of us are ready for it I fear. However we must just go on day by day and do the best we can. I am busy with family photographs and find them most interesting. I want all of you to look through your collections so that you have it in mind what ones you have got as I find I have duplicates of many and want you to take what you have not got. Don't forget. I still have many to do and wondering if I shall have them all finished by the time you come.

It was 20 years on 9th that Harold passed away. We did not forget it. Ruth writes and so does Denis that he has been elected a member of the Students' Representative Council. His Professors are very confident that he will pass his B.A. this year. He looks to continue his studies next year as well. He is doing so well that he does not require further financial assistance from me. We hope that he and Ruth and her husband will be able to come for the celebrations. I fear it will be doubtful if Arthur or Rex will be able to come. Douglas thinks he will have to get a new car before then. By the way, I notice in the Stellander that Douglas is selling 200 of his breeding cattle. It will lessen the work when the boys are away. Joe is also thinking of trading in his car as the family is getting bigger. I have booked a room for them provisionally at the Derecourts.

We are glad to hear that Pam is better and the rest of the Kroonstad clan are well. We expect they will arrive some days before October 14th. Dot is also looking to come with their family and may travel via Kimberley.

I noticed that the sun rises at Grass Ridge about ten to 15 minutes earlier than here. I think the reason is that the veldt is much more level whereas we are more in a hollow. The days are getting appreciably longer and shall, I hope, be able to get more work done each day. As it is, I rise at 6.30. We experienced our coldest night on 9th when we had ten degrees of frost. It has been very cold some days.

A little while ago I wrote to Mr Haddow to enquire if there was any Y.M.C.A. work at either East London or Port Elizabeth that he thought I could be of any assistance. He has replied that he fears that anno domini is against me. However I have offered, so that's that.

Joe has sent us a book for putting cigarette pictures in. If any of you have any to give away, we should like to have them. I am not suggesting you waste any money in smoking so as to get the pictures. I am asking the Governor General's Fund to take the matter up and sell the pictures for war funds. A new series of birds are now being issued.

I expect some of you were listening in to the Queen's message to the women of America on Sunday night. It came over very clearly.

Alison has kindly offered to help with accommodation for October and no doubt there will be other places available.

Uncle Dudley is contemplating going in for electric light for Grass Ridge. His Gloria light has just about gone in. One night when we were there, it was out and we used a couple of paraffin lamps and a candle in my hand to read the paper.

Later. Nice letters from Grace and Dot this a.m. Dot suggests coming by car and picking up some of the Kroonstad contingent if they do not go by Mafikeng and Kimberley. They want to see the Air Commando on route.

Grace reports that all the children have done very well in their school exams for the past quarter.

Mom has been busy planting seedlings lately. Hope they all grow. We had some thunder last evening but no rain. Today it is quite hot again.

Mary is back again after her month in Port Elizabeth. She has been nursing a case of pneumonia at Tarka since then.

We are trying an experiment this month by using the electric stove to see if it comes out cheaper than using the Esse.

Lots of love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
Wednesday August 20th, 1941.

My dear All,

The best news is that as I write, a soft rain is falling. For the last few days the weather has been threatening and last evening we had a good deal of thunder and lightning but no rain until late and during the night. We can do with a good deal more. So far 72 points have been registered. We still have a good supply in our tanks but shall be pleased to see them all full up in anticipation of the large influx of guests – who may require a bath now and then.

I notice that the Cape Education Department has decided to extend the September holidays a week longer so as to include Paul Kruger's birthday in the holiday. Schools are to reopen on October 15th. I do not know if this will apply to the Free State and Transvaal schools but in any case, it will not cause the children to miss many days of schooling and we hope all will be able to come. I also notice that the Air Commando is due in Vryburg on Monday October 6th so I expect Douglas and family will want to be there for that event. If so, it will make their visit to us very short. Reg and Dot also want to see the Commando either at Kimberley or Mafeking. The Commando is not coming here. In any case, we hope you will all come as soon as you can and stay as long as possible. I think the Commando can get on alright even if you are not there.

On Saturday afternoon we had a call from Denham Collett of Graaff Reinet. He was on his way to the Game Reserve. He is a great talker. He wanted me to show him round the town and to see a few people. At the first house we called, he said he would not stop longer than five minutes. I was with him for half an hour and as I had to prepare for Sunday's service at short notice, I had to leave him. He wanted to go and see his brother in the Hanetzberg – where Reg took us some years ago. He is travelling alone at present.

I am working hard at my photos to get them finished before you come. I hope I shall be able to manage it but am doubtful. Of course you will bring your cameras.

Perhaps I was not sufficiently explicit last week re Denis' financial position. For some time I have advanced something against the balance of my brother Joe's legacy. This amount will be repaid when Denis come of age next year.

On Saturday Mom and I went to the bio to see Men of Boys' Town which I referred to recently. It gave me some thoughts for my address the following day. Joyce went to see it on Monday evening.

We are sorry to hear that Mr Dersley is sinking. His wife is quite blind and we all thought that she would be the first to pass out. They have been married for over sixty years. They are living in Somerset East.

Mary is nursing some of Rocklands girls who have scarlet fever. Uncle Walter we went to see on Sunday afternoon. Olive has just been to say that he is suffering from a severe cough and had to get the doctor to him last evening. Miss Moys is nursing him at present.

Later. At dinner time another half inch of rain is registered. The ground is now properly soaked. The garden boy has gone home for the day, without leave.

For the first time for a very long while there is no post today from anyone. I hope there is nothing wrong at your homes.

Mom has been busy having all the walls and pictures cleaned up and various plans are being discussed, details later.

Aunt Letty will be 85 on 29th. She is wonderful.

Later still. It is now quite calm and the sun is shining. Mom is going up to see Uncle Walter and as the boy is not here, I shall go to post when I have finished the letters.

Lots of love to all and hoping to hear from you tomorrow. Hope Douglas has a good sale on Friday.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141
Wednesday August 27th, 1941.

My dear All,

I have not heard from any member of the clan what is the exact time when an object casts its shadow exactly the height of such object. Here is something else that I came across whilst at Grass Ridge which the younger ones can work out and they will be surprised at the results:-

Multiply	1 by 8 and add 1
	12 by 8 and add 2
	123 by 8 “ “ 3
	1234 by 8 “ “ 4
	12345 by 8 “ “ 5
	123456 by 8 “ “ 6
	1234567 by 8 “ “ 7
	12345678 by 8 “ “ 8
	123456789 by 8 “ “ 9

It is interesting. Try it and send me the results.

Last week we did not receive any letters from Kroonstad. Hope there is nothing wrong. Perhaps we shall get a double dose today. Dot's letter came late but was very welcome. Their plans are to leave Potgietersrus on October 5th for Vryburg, see the Air Commando there on Monday and arrive here via Kimberley on Tuesday evening. Personally I don't think they will do it quite so quickly. However we shall wait and see. We presume Douglas and family will travel with them. I see it is today that Douglas is having the sale of 20 of his breeding stock. Hope he gets good prices. I think Dot says they must be back by October 19th. She suggests taking Grace's boys back as far as Kroonstad if Grace stays longer with us. Joe says he can get ten days or a week's leave but does not state when they look to arrive. We hope to hear from the other members of the clan in due course.

We have had a beautiful rain - over an inch - all of which has gone into the tanks. Everything seems to be coming on in the garden nicely, trees in blossom. Mom has been busy planting lots of things and I hope they all grow.

Our next door neighbours are having a sale of furniture this Saturday and we wonder what sort of tenant will occupy the house. Perhaps we shall be able to get a room or rooms there for extra visitors.

Aunt Eliza honoured us with a visit this week, the first time she has been out of her house for many weeks. The weather is much warmer now and hope she will get about more often. Joyce continues to get good news from Dudley. He is still in Abyssinia so far as we know. Uncle Walter has been in bed for some days and has Doctor Scholtz and a nurse in attendance. His cough is very troublesome. Mary is still nursing at Rocklands. Josie Biggs turned up yesterday for a few days. Have not seen her yet. Two of her daughters are working in Port Elizabeth.

Had a nice letter from Milner Brown. Naturally he is glad to be in Port Elizabeth and is able to get home to his family pretty often. He is a Lieutenant in the Air Force.

Old Mr Dersley passed away on Saturday afternoon last. We always thought his wife would have gone first. She is quite blind and very helpless. He was a most devoted husband.

Later. Letter from Grace says they are boring for water again on the plot. They did not get the rain we had last week. She does not give any indication of the plans they are making for October. Perhaps it is too early.

Dot says they are wanting rain badly. Everyone is busy gardening. A lady who studied gardening at Kirstenbosch years ago has come to live near to them. So she feels she must buck up.

It has been so mild that we have not had a fire in the dining room for more than a week. It nearly rained last night again but it did not come off. I got up after midnight and brought in the chairs. There was plenty of thunder.

Nurse Edith writes that she wants to come and pay us a visit in November. Cathie has sold the hotel and is leaving East London. Lots of love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock. Box 141.
Wednesday September 3rd, 1941.

My dear All,

Let me correct a typing error re the multiplication of the figures in a recent letter. The last line should have read multiply by 9. Mary so far is the only one who has referred to same and found the sum is correct. The following is the answers:- first line = 9, then 98, 987, 9876, 98765, 987654, 9876543, 98765432 and last line 987654321.

You will be sorry to hear that Mom slipped and fell in the little lobby at the kitchen door on Monday and bruised her right arm. It is getting better but it might have been much worse. You will also be sorry to hear that Mary, who has been nursing some of the girls at Rocklands, developed kidney trouble and was sent to hospital. Fortunately it has yielded to treatment and she was discharged on Monday. She stayed with us one night and left by train on Tuesday morning after an early breakfast for Louisvale. She looks to stay there for two or three weeks. Uncle Walter too has had to have a doctor and nurse but is now up again but is far from strong. Olive asked me to phone for her sister, Cyril's wife, to come over and help her. They came on Saturday and Cyril returned to his farm the next day. He says his health is greatly improved since he gave up smoking. He says he has paid doctor's bill to the extent of £500 to £600 in operations and treatment and they did not discover what was wrong with him. He found out himself that it was nothing but smoking. Even a single cigarette poisoned him. I wish others whom I love very dearly would take Cyril's advice and give up the habit. I feel confident they would benefit in health and pocket by so doing.

Our Municipal Mayoral election took place on Monday afternoon. Mr Cull was re-elected and I was also re-elected as deputy. The Mayor celebrated the event by inviting all the Councillors and their wives to dinner at the hotel. Mom did not go. All his guests were also invited to the bio after. I only went to the dinner. Mom stayed with Mary.

I find that I can now rise at six without switching on the light. The early mornings are the best time of the day to get on with my jobs. The maid arrives about 7.40 or so. We always listen in at 8.15 a.m. and 1.15 pm. and 6 p.m. for news. The weather the last few days and nights have been very windy. We notice plants and trees are beginning to show renewed life. Our fruit trees are in blossom. It is to be hoped we do not have any late frosts again.

Ruth writes that she and Denis will come for the day on 14th but must return the same evening. She is not sure if Mr Mackenzie will be able to come. Douglas says Lynne is putting in for a week's leave but is not entitled to a holiday yet. Rex is busy in Kimberley and so far has not been able to get a weekend leave to go home. So it looks as though Douglas and Evelyn and the two youngest children will be coming for certain and we hope way will open for some, if not all, the others as well. Dot and family look to arrive on the 7th. No doubt we shall hear from Grace and Joe today before we post. By the way, it is Aunt Eliza's and Joe's birthdays this month.

Grace reports that their drilling for water has proved a blank, having struck dolomite rock. They are trying another spot. Jean was not well when she wrote. They were all much interested in the Air Commando. Douglas writes that his sale of cattle was a wash out, only nine head being sold. There is nothing from Joe or Dot so far this week. I weighed myself again this month and am down again to 147 lbs. I am keeping very well I am glad to say. We are going to the Church of England directly after dinner today. Mom's elbow is getting better. Hope you are all well.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock.
Wednesday September 10th, 1941.

My dear All,

We are sorry to hear that in each home no rain has fallen to refresh your gardens, especially at this season when nature is so full of life. Our fig trees and vines are rapidly coming into leaf but we fear we may have late frosts yet. The weather has been very changeable during the week. We have had the minimum as high as 91 in the shade and the minimum as low as 26.

At last I have finished the album of family photos and I think you find it interesting. There are no less than 540 photographs in the one book. There will be about 16 scrap books besides which will contain over 2,000 pictures. I hope to have them all complete before you come.

Talking of photos, Joe says he is trying to borrow a cine camera for the occasion. He has joined a cine club and we all know what good snaps he takes.

On Saturday afternoon, Mr Metcalf suggested our going for a spin with him to his son-in-law's farm about seven miles out. Of course he does not drive. It was a lovely afternoon and we quite enjoyed the little outing. He and his daughter have gone to Port Elizabeth and Jeffreys Bay. They want to see the Air Commando. He is about as blind as I am. In fact, I can never spot an aeroplane when they fly over here, which they do very often. There is a training school at Queenstown about 90 miles east of Cradock.

I mentioned some time ago that we were trying the use of electricity for cooking during the month. We find that it is cheaper than coal. Our light and power bill generally comes to about one pound per month. Last month when we used no coal except in the dining room on some evenings, the cost was just £1.5.0 for the month. As a rule, we use about two bags of anthracite coal at 6/- a bag.

Have I told you how we have beaten the mouse and rat trouble? Besides closing up any holes we could find, we have used an old motor tube and cut it into strips and tacked it along the bottom of most of the doors so as to prevent rodents from visiting different rooms at night. We have not seen any traces of them since. Of course we keep all foodstuff under cover.

Mr Thomas has installed an electric cooler in Aunt Eliza's little breakfast room. Our pantry is so cool that so far we have not found it necessary to have a cooler.

Joyce and Raymond are going to Cape Town for the six week's holiday at Xmas. She has not heard from Dudley for several weeks now but thinks he must be in Egypt now. Most of the men in their wireless messages that are read on Sundays refer to the possibility of being home for Xmas.

Joe and family have paid a night visit to the elephant game reserve at Addo. About 20 animals come to the Ranger's house to be fed each night. They were very interested in all they saw. Joe does not say when they are likely to arrive here. Ruth and Denis will come by the morning train and leave the same evening. Evelyn does not think Lynne or Rex will be able to come. Perhaps we shall hear from Grace today what their plans are.

Later. Grace says they have recently put down two more boreholes but have not struck any water. This is most disappointing as they hoped to make a garden in front of the plot. No word as to when they look to arrive. Dot reports all well and she is getting excited about their visit. They guess they will be here on October 8th. Nothing from Joe and Blodwen today. Letter from Evelyn recently said Rex was very interested in his work at Kimberley. Do not think he will be able to get leave. Lynne also is doubtful.

Mom has quite got over her fall. It might have been much more serious. We hear that Denham Collett is back home in Graaff Reinet. He did not get to the game reserve.

Mary writes from Louisvale that she is enjoying her rest. Had a comfortable journey up. She looks to be away for about three weeks.

Uncle Gervase has sold his farm Prospect and retains Orchards. Have not heard what he got for it.

The service last Sunday were well attended. The guides and scouts attended.

Love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock.
Wednesday September 17th, 1941.

My dear All,

Weather cold again, strong winds and very unpleasant weather during the past weeks. We were out last evening at the Poplars otherwise we should have had a fire going. Ernest did have a fire and we sat round and read a very interesting book of the state of affairs in Russia. I have just taken the temperatures for the past 24 hours (6.30 a.m.) The maximum has been 63 and minimum 31 as compared with 85 and 49 for the previous 24 hours. Our wisteria, figs and fruit trees are in leaf. I hope the fruit will not be affected. The garden should be looking quite nice by this time next month.

Aunt Eliza celebrates her 82nd birthday tomorrow. She is keeping wonderfully well but is not able to walk across a room without assistance. She is wonderfully busy and writes a great deal. She holds the record so far as our family is concerned. Uncle Joe was 81½. She is very interested in all the plans for the coming event but thinks we should not have any "do". We are looking forward to the arrival of as many of the clan as can possibly come. If all goes well, it will be the first Golden Wedding in the Collett family and the second in our branch of the Butlers.

We are still awaiting news of when to expect Grace and family. Douglas we presume will travel by car in company with Reg and Dot arriving on October 8th. Joe looks to arrive on 11th, Ruth and Denis on 14th.

Mrs Derecourt is full up but we have secured a couple of rooms just opposite us here which will be convenient. Both are furnished. Our new neighbours next door have one furnished and one not furnished that we can have. We went to see the Websters yesterday and they will be away on holiday until the evening of the 13th so will not be able to take Douglas and Co. Other furnished rooms will be available next door but one to us and Alison says she will be able to put someone up. The Weavers may also be away until the school re-open but their house no doubt will be available. Aunt Eliza has offered a stretcher so you need not be afraid that there will not be room for all. We hope nothing will arise to upset the plans.

Uncle Bertie's son was married very quietly last week to a Miss Lanham, a neighbour of Uncle Norman's.

One of Douglas and one of my letters recently have been censored. On making enquiries, I find that it is not done locally but by the Post Office somewhere along the line and letters are taken at random from various bags for examination.

I find that 500 sheets of the thin paper I use for my weekly dear alls lasts me exactly 15 months. I still have a stock of 500 on hand but where I shall be able to renew the stock after that, I do not know as the war has upset all that class of stock.

Later. No letters from any of the family today – which is most unusual – but a postcard from Dot says she is very busy and missed writing. We excuse her and no doubt we shall hear soon.

I am sorry to say that three cases of smallpox have been reported from the location but we have taken all precautions and everyone is being inoculated.

We are both keeping well and find plenty to occupy my time.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock.
Wednesday September 24th, 1941.

My dear All,

Whilst I think of it let me say that Uncle Walter is up and about again. Olive says he seems better than he has been for years. We all went for a little spin on Sunday afternoon and enjoyed it.

Invitations are out for Eileen Saunder's wedding on 4th at Fish River. Gordon has written asking me to propose the health of his mother. Eileen is marrying a Mr Juste of Walmer. There is to be a Toc H conference here over that weekend and we have been asked to put up a couple of the delegates so we shall have to hurry back from the wedding.

There was just a frost last night. It turned very cold during the afternoon. The wind was very nasty. It does take it out of me. At present I am in the hands of the dentist. About three years ago he made a small plate for my lower jaw but it was never satisfactory. He said my mouth had a peculiar shape and was difficult to adjust the plate. He offered to get another mould but for various reasons, did not do so. Just before Xmas last year he said he could get what was needed from a dental friend in Pretoria. He phoned me a few days ago saying he had now got it. So he is busy with making a new outfit and I hope it will be satisfactory. My dentist in Cape Town said I should take a few front teeth I still have in the lower jaw to my grave, they were so good. I hope he is right. Time will show.

Grace wrote last week that their detachment looks to arrive by train on Sunday morning 12th, Dot on 8th and Joe on 11th, Ruth and Denis on 14th but have not yet heard when Douglas and Co will arrive. We are hoping Aunts Letty and Rosa will come. Beryl looked in for a few minutes yesterday but could not say if anyone from Redlands would be here. Uncle Owen and Aunt Kate are at present in Port Elizabeth. Uncle has been to Dr Stewart re his eyes and says he cannot operate at present.

Later. Ted writes that Grace is not too well but they have been having bad weather and there is a lot of sickness about in the town. Ted hopes that he will be able to come with the others but the staff seems more or less disorganised. They are very disappointed that they did not find water.

Dot writes cheerfully as usual and very busy. Their plans are not altered.

There have been four cases of smallpox locally amongst non Europeans and the situation is well in hand.

I sometimes feel as though I should like to return with you and see your homes again but suppose the approaching heat would be against such a visit. Mom talks of going to the coast but we shall see. Mr Metcalf is away at Jeffreys Bay but will be back soon.

Joyce had a long letter from Dudley recently. He is still in Abyssinia and was not able to write for several weeks as he was constantly on the move driving motor lorries to the coast. He expected to be moved up to Egypt before long.

Aunt Eliza spent a quiet day on her 82nd anniversary last Thursday. Am glad to say she has the loan of Mrs Curson's wireless set, or at least Mr Thomas has. This will be a great comfort and pleasure to Joyce and Ray.

We are hoping soon to hear from Douglas and Evelyn soon as to their plans and how many of the family will be able to come. Our plans are well in hand and I hope there will not be anything to upset the arrangements for a happy family reunion.

Ernest's daughter, Joan, has, we hear, secured a teaching appointment at Rondebosch for next year. She will be greatly missed here.

Mary is due back from Louisvale next week. Her health has improved we are glad to hear.

Lots of love to each and all and hoping to see you all very soon,

Your loving Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock.
Sunday September 28th, 1941

My dear All,

This must be considered a special edition of the weekly newsletter. My reason for doing so is that as we now know who to expect and when to expect them and as some of you may be making plans etc. before the usual letter arrives, I thought it best to post early.

Douglas writes that they look to leave Vryburg on Wednesday afternoon 8th for Rooispruit via Bloemfontein, sleeping at Uncle Owen's and proceeding to Grass Ridge and sleeping there and visiting Saunders at Highlands and arriving here on Sunday afternoon 12th. I am glad to hear that Lynne is also coming and Douglas hopes that Rex may be able to come by train. No mention is made of Arthur but I expect he will also come to help drive. Lynne has to be at work on Thursday morning so Douglas proposes leaving early on Wednesday 15th via Kimberley taking Rex and the two younger children back to school. Of course we should like a long visit but can quite understand the position. I have previously told you of the plans of the others.

We have secured two rooms at the house next door but one on our left. One room has two single beds and the other one. Douglas and Evelyn and either Arthur or Rex can have these rooms. Grace, Dot, Cicely and baby Charles can have our spare room, Lynne, Pam and Jean the work room and Joe and family immediately opposite us, Ted and Reg also there; David, Harold, Arthur or Rex and Kingsley in two rooms next door on our right and Alan and Norman in our drawing room. Ruth and Denis and Mr Mackenzie, if he is able to come, intend arriving in the morning and leaving the same night. We hope they will be able to come. All meals will be served here.

We are extending the dining room table to its full capacity (12 feet) and may bring in the extension table from the work room and so make a "T" shape. The back stoep can also be used for meals if necessary. We are hiring extra chairs and crockery. We have bought a ham from Uncle Jack and Enid has kindly offered to cook same.

So far as a programme is concerned, we have not made any definite plans except that I want to have a short thanksgiving service after the Sunday evening service here in the home. Naturally we expect all to attend service with us in church that evening. Rev Weavers has asked Blodwen to sing a solo that evening. I have arranged with Mr Lidbetter to take a photo of us all on 14th. We shall be "at home" from 3.30 to 6 in the afternoon if any of our friends may like to come to see us. Relations, of course, will be welcome any time during the day. Joe most likely will bring a cine camera with him.

You will be interested in knowing that for the time-being at any rate I have finished with my scrap books. There are 12 assorted ones containing 2154 photos, making a grand total 3185. I do not suggest that you will have time to look through these in detail but you may be interested in seeing the books. I still have to write the titles under many of them.

We are hoping that as many of the brothers and sisters and the in-laws etc. will come and see you all. Aunt Agnes came to town for the first time for about two years. She was Mom's bridesmaid and has ordered a new dress for the occasion.

In a few minutes we are going with Uncle Walter and Olive to Katkop to dinner and will post this on our return so that you can get it early in the week. Later. We have had a nice day and it looks nice for rain.

Aunt Gladys' Norman is inviting Aunt Rosa to come to them and they will bring her in with them on 14th. We hope Aunt Letty will be here as well. It would be nice if all Mom's brothers and sisters could be here. We hope Aunt Eliza will honour us by spending as much of the day with us as possible. Aunt Emmie of course cannot be here but Joyce will represent her.

Much love to each and all from us both,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock.
Wednesday October 1st, 1941

My dear All,

Three months to go before the end of the year. How time is flying.

Having posted to you earlier in the week, it seems hardly necessary to write again but as some of you will be starting for Cradock within a day or so after this reaches you, I may as well carry on as usual. I hope that nothing will occur to upset any of your plans. Here we are doing what we can to get everything ready as far as possible. Unfortunately our garden boy wants to leave – in fact he says he is not coming today. It will be very awkward but no doubt shall find a way out. We shall have to engage extra help for washing up etc. I am sorry that Grace and Dot cannot be here earlier so as to help Mom. Mary is back from Louisvale on Monday night and left first thing on Tuesday morning to nurse a man at Mortimer suffering from pneumonia. Hope to hear from the family during the day.

Joyce has had a letter from Dudley from Egypt this week so it does not look like he is coming down on leave yet a while. He writes very interesting letters. Joyce and Ray are going to Cape Town for the Xmas holidays. Aunt is talking of giving up her house so as to save expense.

An old Cradock resident – wife and husband – told me the other day that they were too old to be bothered with cooking and housekeeping but were not too old to enjoy life. They have their own property in Mossel Bay which they have let and they just travel about where they like and enjoy themselves. They are staying a few months here at Derecourts at present and seem very happy. I feel very much the same as they do.

The rooms we have secured for you at Blegnaults and Kreiglers are quite comfortable and I hope will be found such when you arrive. The ones next door are not much of it but being so close, will be useful for sleeping. You will spend most of the time here with us.

Later. The only letter to hand today is from Dot who says they are starting on Saturday and may arrive here on Tuesday evening. She says Kroonstad holidays are on earlier. Why did not Grace's children come to us before? We have just been informed that Ruth is coming up for the Toc H Conference on Saturday and have arranged for her to stay with us. Wish she could stay over for the week but we understand she is coming with Denis on 14th as well.

We have not heard from Joe yet if he is coming by car or train. I hardly expect I will write next Wednesday but one never knows.

Meanwhile I hope you all have journeying mercies and that nothing will occur to mar the happiness of the occasion. Today we received a golden envelope containing congratulations from Mr and Mrs Douglas Faulds from Durban. It is very kind of them to wire.

Much love to each and all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday October 22nd, 1941

My dear All,

I see I did not post to you on 8th or 16th on account of the near approach of the Golden Wedding and now that event is past, I am doubtful as to the desirability of my trying to recount the doings of the past two weeks. As my letter generally circulates amongst some who were not with us last week, perhaps they and you may be interested in hearing again some of the happenings of those days.

Let my first words be those of thankfulness that everything passed off so nicely – all the family and all the 16 grandchildren were here and the time passed all too quickly. It seems as a dream now that it is over and I hope nothing but happy memories will remain with you.

Reg and Dot and the two sweet children were the first to arrive (Wednesday 8th) followed by Joe and Blodwen with their three hopefuls by train on Saturday 11th. Ted and Grace with their five arrived by train on Sunday morning and Douglas and four children by car about dinner time the same day. Rex arrived by train on Saturday night, I think. Ruth and Denis came by train early on Tuesday and left the same evening. We should have been glad for them to have stayed longer but were very glad they came.

We were 25 to dinner on Sunday and Monday and 27 on Tuesday. The 12 foot extension table I bought on a sale some years ago came in most useful and with the addition of another, we were able to accommodate all in the dining room. We had secured a very nice ham and turkey from Enid for Thursday – which she also cooked for us – and with the addition of other good things, I think everyone was satisfied.

I should have said the celebrations commenced on Sunday afternoon when Rev and Mrs Weavers came along and had family worship in our drawing room. Alan and Roy played hymns on the pianola and we all joined in the singing. Mr Weavers spoke on the incident in the life of Isaac “who pitched his tent and built an altar and dug a well”. We all enjoyed the service but we felt we did not deserve all the kind words respecting ourselves. We all attended service in the evening – including the two babies. Blodwen sang a solo during the service at Rev Weavers’ request. Dot sat in the choir with her. Joe sat at the back of the church with baby and during the service, took him out and sat in the motorcar. Baby Trevor recognised his mother when she sang her solo “Just for today”. Unfortunately the organist had only had one practise with Blodwen. It appears that during the service, Reg’s car was burgled and his Crooks coloured glasses stolen from the cubby hole. Wednesday morning. I do not seem to be making much progress with my letter. Monday and Tuesday were pretty fully occupied with Council committee work and I am sorry to say, two fresh cases of smallpox were reported yesterday.

On THE day, letters and telegrams came pouring in. Over sixty golden greetings were delivered besides numerous letters etc. I have not yet started acknowledging them but must do so as soon as possible. One of the presents – Irons children – was a golden autograph book and I think all the visitors signed their names in it. There are just on one hundred. In this book I shall record a list of telegrams and letters and presents received. We were each presented with a gold mounted walking stick suitably engraved with our initials and date. They are made from colonial stinkwood and are very handsome. These will be kept for special occasions. Douglas, Ted, Reg and Denis were called upon for speeches and many very kind words were spoken. Denis amused us all by referring to a guest who brought a Mr Goldstein to a Golden Wedding as a contribution to such a function.

Mr Lidbetter came in the morning to take photos but so far we have not seen the result. A number of snaps were also taken and some we have seen are quite good. Joe had a cine camera and took a number of movie photos which we hope will turn out well. They have to be sent to Johannesburg to be done.

Tuesday afternoon was a busy time. Aunt Agnes and Uncle Jack and Enid were amongst the early arrivals and a steady stream continued until late afternoon. Best part of 100 came. Flowers arrived in profusion. Ruth brought a beautiful bouquet from Grahamstown and other flowers from the park and private gardens made a grand show. Evelyn was quite busy arranging them in all sorts of vases. The Methodist Women's Association and the W.C.T.U. sent lovely bunches. An outstanding oil painting came from the Mother Superior of the Convent. Aunt Eliza and Joyce were with us in the morning and she was snapped in her chair. Uncle Walter and Mr Metcalf were amongst the guests. Most of the afternoon was spent on the grass at the back of the stoep. No speeches were made but everyone was very friendly. The weather was perfect for such an occasion. In the evening, the grandchildren gave us a little entertainment each doing their parts very creditably. Blodwen was in good form at the piano. Joe had arranged for a show of some of his movie photos, a local electrician kindly lending his projector with some of his own films. These were very interesting. He has promised to come again when Joe's films taken on Tuesday are ready. Joe also took films of Aunt Eliza and Aunt Jessie and some at Grass Ridge which they visited during the few days they were here. The party on Tuesday evening concluded with a little hop which those who took part in quite enjoyed. I think everyone was quite ready for bed by ten o'clock. We were very pleased with the singing of the little children and their playing of the piano. The pianola gave all a great deal of pleasure and I was surprised how well they manipulated it. Norman's song to "grandpapa and grandmamma" was very pretty.

Sleeping arrangements were satisfactory. Alison kindly put up four of our guests and we hired five rooms in three different houses close to us for some of the others. We had dinners and suppers altogether here, our dining room easily accommodated all. I have forgotten to mention the



Standing: Harold Irons, Joe & Douglas Butler, David & Pam Irons, Arthur Butler, Reg Hudson, Rex & Denis Butler, Ted Irons
Seated: Lynne Butler, Blodwen Butler holding Trevor Butler, Evelyn, Charles & Emma Butler, Dot Hudson, Ruth Butler, Grace Irons
In front: Roy Butler, Jean & Charles Irons, Norman Hudson, Cicely Butler, Alan Hudson, Merle & Kingsley Butler

wedding cake which the children kindly provided. It was made locally and bore our names and date of wedding. It was greatly admired and appreciated. Our mid-day lunch was served under the vine trellis. It looked very pretty and was much enjoyed. We were sorry that Ruth and Denis had to

return to Grahamstown the same evening but were very glad that they came. All the children and young folk mixed very freely and were most happy together. It is very doubtful if ever all will meet together again. I have not calculated the distances travelled by various members of the family to reach here but will do so later. It will run into four figures easily.

On Wednesday evening we went to a braaivleis function about ten miles out of town. It was a very windy day so did not stay very long. It was got up in connection with the junior United Party. The children enjoyed coming home in the dark. Of course we took our own provisions with us. On Thursday afternoon we went in two cars to Fish River and Grass Ridge. Mom and I stayed with Aunt Jessie whilst the others went on to Grass Ridge. Something however went wrong with Aunt Jessie's car – which she had kindly lent to Joe for the week he was here – and they were stuck in the veldt not too far from the homestead. They phoned to us that they might be late so we decided to come in by train. However after some working with the car and towing it for some distance, it righted itself and they met us at the station and we all got back to town without any further trouble. Joe returned the car the next morning as Aunt Jessie needed it and came back by train. Grace's two big boys left by train for Kroonstad on Thursday night and Reg and Dot left by car early on Friday morning with Grace's two girls and they arrived in Kroonstad a few hours after the boys. They left for Potgietersrus the next morning arriving home quite safely. I think I have told you that Douglas and family left on Wednesday morning so we are left with Grace and Ted and baby. They stayed until next Thursday evening when they go straight to Durban to attend Ted's parents' Golden Wedding on November 11th. We are very glad that we are not left quite alone. I must stop now and continue in my next but must say how thankful we are for all the expressions of loving greetings and care that the family has shown us.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday November 5th, 1941

My dear All,

Well we are not alone as we expected to be. Grace, Ted and baby were booked to leave by the night train last Thursday for Durban. They were already packed up and ready to go when we phoned to the station to find out how the train was running and were informed that the track had been washed away down the line and there was no knowing when the train would arrive, in any case not before next morning. As a matter of fact, the train did not arrive before Saturday or Sunday. It was very fortunate that they did not go as all day Thursday, baby was showing signs of a bad cold coming on. Friday morning he was feverish and it was thought best to call in Doctor and he declared the trouble was measles coming on. He said Grace should not leave for a fortnight and baby should stay in bed for a week. This he has not done as he is so much better and is now running about again. He is not allowed to go outside yet. He has been pretty bad, off his food and running a temperature. Ted of course wired to his parents putting off his trip. He will probably leave tomorrow night and when baby is safe to travel, Grace will return back home to Kroonstad and give up her trip to Durban. Of course this is a great disappointment but no doubt it is the best thing to do under the circumstances. We have been glad to have this extra time with them but it has been rather a thin time for both of them. The weather has been very miserable too, some days it was almost cold enough for a fire. We have had a little rain whilst our neighbouring town of Somerset East has had nearly seven inches. Ted has to be back at the office on 16th so will only have a week with his parents. A friend of Grace's is looking after the children. They phoned to them on Monday evening and found all was well there. We are wondering if Raymond will get measles as he was playing with Baby a day or two before.

We have had nice letters from all the family and glad to see that all were well and had enjoyed the trip. Hope none of them have taken the infection with them.

Sunday Ted and I went to church both morning and evening. It was very cold. After going to bed, I seem to have had nightmare as Mom got a fright as I was calling out etc. Grace and Ted came to the rescue. I had been dreaming about rats but I am quite sure I was perfectly sober when I went to bed. However, Mom thought it best to let Doctor see me so I went without breakfast and got up about dinner time. Dr came in the afternoon and examined me and took my blood pressures etc. Says my heart is in better condition than last year. He could not find anything wrong so that's that. I suppose I shall hear about rats for some time to come. By the way, Ted killed a rat the next night in our big pantry.

I tried the experiment of shaving myself with Ted's razor this week and managed without cutting myself. So I think I shall get one like it and so save going to the barber three times a week.

Mary has been away nursing at Mortimer for about a week. We miss her.

Aunt Emmie has moved back to Armadale, Derry Road, Rondebosch, Cape.

Blodwen's sisters have taken the house Aunt Emmie has just left. Blodwen wants the children to go to Cape Town for the Xmas holidays. Dot suggests that we should go to Port Elizabeth or Uitenhage for December but I do not think it is likely we shall go away. Mom and Ted went to see Uncle Walter yesterday and found them all well.

Later. Grace and Ted are thinking of leaving together for Durban tomorrow night. They are waiting for a wire before deciding.

We are expecting Edith Collett next Thursday. She will be going on a visit to the farms as well.

My paper has torn again. Perhaps I am overloading the typewriter.

Hope you will be able to read it. Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday November 12th, 1941

My dear All,

It is Mary's birthday today and we hope to see her and have a few of her friends to afternoon tea. She has been a very good friend to us – and everyone else so far as that goes.

Well, Grace, Ted and baby Charles left us last Thursday night and the last we heard from them was that they were near Durban and baby was full of beans and Grace has been train sick – like Mom used to be. We are hoping that the Golden Wedding passed off as well as ours did. All the family were not able to be present. It was quite cold when we took them to the station but baby was well wrapped up and apparently suffered no harm. We think it was rather risky taking him so soon after measles. Now we hear from Evelyn that Cecily also developed German Measles after she got back to Beit House but the attack was only slight. Neither Joe nor Dot have reported any of their children sick.

We are glad to hear that Evelyn has found her brooch that was lost. No one has reported finding the belt of Reg's overcoat.

At last I have managed to get off acknowledgements of congratulations to all who sent telegrams, letters and presents, about 150 in all. I will try to include a list of these as I am sure you will be interested.

We are glad to hear that all of you are pleased with the group. I have framed ours with the names and date. I want to get a complete set of snaps to put in the autograph album Grace's family gave us. My Xmas cards will be the next big job to do. Evelyn says the photo was a work of art in getting 27 people to keep still and look sweet all at the same moment.

We hear that Beryl is at Freda's so evidently Freda is home again from Kimberley. We also hear that Eric has been promoted to Sergeant. We understand that Mrs Hudson has gone, or is going, to East London this week. It is hard that she should be separated from the rest of the family like this every year.

We are expecting Edith tomorrow morning. She hopes to spend about four months visiting relations before returning to East London. She has been on holiday at Keiskammahoe for a fortnight during which time they had five inches of rain. We could do with some but hope we do not get it in such a lot all at once. Uncle Jack and Enid had dinner with us yesterday. They are all well at Fish River.

Mom has not been up to concert pitch lately, her feet get so sore and she seems subject to colds so easily. Her throat has been troubling her too. The weather has been very changeable lately. Hot during the day and cold evenings and nights.

We have not heard of any definite plans for Xmas this year. Considering war conditions, I still suggest that presents be cut out. There are so many appeals for war funds that I consider they have first claim. There is no need to cut out cards – we must not forget our friends in remembrances like that but the giving of presents is not necessary. We hear that some of the churches which generally give Xmas trees are not doing so this year. We as a family have had the pleasure of meeting together so recently that the exchange of gifts will be superfluous.

Later. Letter from Dot says she is as busy as usual. The heat has been very trying and no rain. No measles there. Grace and Ted leave on Friday for home. We are having a few friends in Thursday afternoon to meet Edith and Mary. I was up at Market Street this morning. All well there.

If I have time, I want to type some enclosures for this week's letter so will ring off as Douglas used to say. By the way, we are sorry to hear that Douglas was not too well when Evelyn last wrote. Tummy trouble again. We are keeping pretty well. Both of us have a touch of sore throats but hope it will soon pass over.

Lots of love to all
Dad

Supplement to Dear All, November 12th, 1941
List of telegrams received at Golden Wedding 14th October 1941

Mr & Mrs Ambler, Pretoria	Schooling, Cradock
Dan & Josie Biggs, Louisvale	Mr & Mrs Tyson, Johannesburg
All at Vrede, Graaff Reinet	Mr & Mrs Thackwray, Indwe
Jim and Hilda Butler, Louisvale	Trevor Price & family, Cape Town
Letty & Biggs, Brooklyn	Mr & Mrs T van der Spuy, Vryburg
T.B. Collen, Vryburg	Minister Committee, Congregational Church, Vryburg
Rev A J Cook, Somerset West	Mayor, Councillors, Staff Town Clerk, Vryburg
All Colletts at Redlands	Mayor & Mayoress, Vryburg
Roslin Collett, Cape Town	Misses Wookey, Vryburg
Cyril & Mildred Collett, Commadagga	Rev Weavers, Wilderness
Edith Collett, East London	Mrs Whittal, Sister Kidd, Port Elizabeth
George & Hilda Collett, Groenkloof	Watts family, Potgietersrus
Dersley, Somerset East	Gladys Tom Allan Keith Webster, Cape Town
Reg de Beer, Cape Town	
Mrs Derecourt, Cradock	
Mrs Edwards, Gwelo	Total 62
Mr & Mrs Douglas Fawlds, Durban	
Florence Family, Fish Hoek	
J P Frylinck, Vryburg	
Fear family, Kimberley	
Hudson Family, Vryburg	
Miss J.E. Hicks, Roberts Heights	
Mr & Ms Hultzer, Durban	
Halliday, Cape Town	
Eileen Edgar Juste, Walmer	
Jones, Cape Town	
Charles Lawford, Fish River	
Metcalf family, Vryburg	
Rosa Maskell, Dwaal	
Molly & Mike Meyers, Vryburg	
Maisie and Chas Merrifield, Port Elizabeth	
Mrs Maskew Miller, Grahamstown	
Mr & Mrs Dorothy Murray, Grahamstown	
Mr & Mrs Fred Michau, Cradock	
Girly Moir, Cape Town	
Women's Auxiliary, Potgietersrus	
Pierce, Kroonstad	
Mr & Mrs E.B. Phillips, Cradock	
Etta & Bessie Price, Port Elizabeth	
Rev Piper, Port Elizabeth	
Ross & Milly Roberts, Grahamstown	
Rhodes University, Grahamstown	
Rex family, Grahamstown	
Jock & Amy Ross, Cape Town	
Mr & Mrs Southall, Vryburg	
Ethel Seller, Port Elizabeth	
Annie, May, Clifford Saunders, Fish River	
Ernest & Doris Saunders, Kroonstad	
Mr Sowden & Schroder family, East London	

<p>Messages received per phone: Mrs G W Wilson P.D., K, van Heerden M.W. Pretorius Dr Kemp Per Douglas Butler C van der Riet R.H. Casewell J.P. Frylinck W. Jones</p> <p>Letters and Cards received from: Mr & Mrs Hy McLeod, Cradock Thall family, Cradock Pam Collett, Fish River Mrs Fear, Cape Town Mr & Mrs Bennett and Mrs Jubb, Grahamstown Maude Miller, Cradock Mrs & Miss Stoops, Cradock Mrs Joe Butler, Uitenhage Mr & Mrs Lidbetter, Cradock Ruth (Mrs Mackenzie) Grahamstown Mr Mackenzie, Grahamstown Eliza Butler, Cradock Sons of England Lodge, Vryburg Joyce Townshend, Cradock Gwen Hudson, Vryburg Muriel and Wallis Wells, Maritzburg Hilda Daniel, Oatlands Kate & Owen Collett, Rooispruit Bertie & May Trollip, Trollip Siding Mrs Rosa Maskell, Dwaal Letty Butler, Graaff Reinet Rev & Mrs Legg, Underberg Mrs Ritchie & T.D. Henrey, Cradock Dr & Mrs Thornton, Cradock Mrs Turberville, Grahamstown Norman & Gladys Collett, Fish River Mr & Mrs Kelly & Mrs Craig, Cradock Grannie Trollip, Tarka Mr & Mrs Stock, East London Mrs Hodgson, Uitenhage Mr & Mrs Gordon Amm, Potgietersrus Mrs Eccles, Paarl Mr & Mrs G.H. Byrnes, Cradock Edith Collett, East London Charles H Collett, Umzimkulu Mr & Mrs Mullins, Kroonstad Mrs Irons, Doonside Rev Willie Mafeking on behalf of Vryburg Coloured Church Mr & Mrs Stoor Garlake, Cradock</p>	<p>Reg & Dot Hudson, Potgietersrus Alison Butler, Cradock</p> <p>Presents received from: Mrs Fear, Necklace and scarf pin Douglas & Joe, gold mounted sticks Ruth, John & Denis, cut glass vases Alison Butler, scent & bath salts Mary Butler, golden delicacies Our Children, wedding cake Joyce Townshend, bath mat Rev & Mrs Legg, book Reg & Dot Hudson, spring cushions Roy & Merle Butler, gilt beakers Convent Sacred Hearth, oil painting Mr & Mrs A.D. Roberts, scent, hankies & writing companion Jessie Collett, loan of motor car Gwen Hudson, eggs (turkey) Mrs J.G. Hudson, lemon syrup & lard Evelyn Butler, cakes Dorothy Butler, cakes & fruit Grace Irons, bouquet & poultry Jessie Collett butter Kate Dudley Collett, loan of table cloth, butter Irons family, autograph book.</p> <p>Flowers from: Mrs & Miss Stoops, Ruth MacKenzie Mrs Thornton Mr & Mrs Stock Mr & Mrs Kelly Mrs Craig W.C.T.U Women's Auxiliary Mrs Law Mrs S Garlake Mrs Fick Olive Collett Mrs Lidbetter</p>
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34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday November 19th, 1941

My dear All,

It is a dull cold morning. We are experiencing some strange weather conditions, extremes of cold and heat and practically no rain. Our next district, Somerset East, has had an average of about five inches last month. However we must take it as it comes and no doubt we shall get our share in due course.

Edith arrived on time on Thursday last and I hope is enjoying the rest and quiet of our home. Mary has been away for the weekend otherwise we see her fairly frequently. Of course both she and Edith, being nurses, have much in common. Edith does not do any nursing now as she is not strong enough. We took her to the Cradock Music Club closing concert on Thursday night. It was a very good performance and took the form of a social as well as concert. It was not over until nearly midnight. That was Friday evening not Thursday. On Saturday evening we were invited to the Boys' High School to see an exhibition of educational moving films. Many of them were very wonderful. Joe would have enjoyed seeing them. Close up views of volcanoes in action etc were thrilling.

Sunday was Temperance Sunday and I was invited to speak at the kaffir Sunday School. The interpreter said he used to work for Aunt Eliza and he knew Uncle Bert and Aunt Emmie very well. He is now a fully fledged teacher. After the service, as I was walking home, another native ran after me asking for sixpence as he wanted to go to church in the evening and did not like not to put something in the collection. I suspected that he wanted the money for buying liquor. I made a surprise visit to the beer hall the same afternoon. The Town Council runs the beer hall where only kaffir beer – non intoxicating - is sold. There was no sign of drunkenness or disorder but it does happen sometimes that some who get brandy etc from the canteens in town cause trouble.

Yesterday afternoon Mom and I were invited to the 15th anniversary of the old peoples' home. Aunt Emmie used to live in this house before it was converted into its present use. Aunt Charlotte has been a resident there for some years. They are well looked after. It accommodates about 20 and is run by a committee of the D.R. Church.

Tonight we are going to see a government film on Abyssinia which should be interesting.

Congratulations are still coming in.

We hope to hear from Grace and Ted today that they have arrived safely at home. Baby Charles seems to have got over his measles without any ill effects of the journey. Whilst they have been away, their calf got loose and overfed herself and died.

Denis is spending a month's holiday at Nahoon Mouth and after that, goes to Potchefstroom camp for a few weeks further training. We hope to see him whenever he passes here. Ruth will be acting as Commissioner for the forthcoming examinations. She has done this for a number of years.

Snapshots of the Golden Wedding have been coming in and I am sending them round. Those who want copies should mark on the back what they want. I want two of each for record purposes.

We have suggested that Joe and family should spend Xmas here but have not heard yet. What are the other branches of the family going to do?

Both of us have had colds this week. I have half a dozen hankies in use at the same time. Mom is better than she was last week.

Later. Letters from Grace and Dot just to hand. Baby Charles none the worse for his trip. The Golden Wedding went off nicely. They were presented with a wireless set. Mrs Irons is getting blind. Kroonstad is suffering from drought, children all well. All glad to be home again. All well at Potgietersrus. Children very happy with their pets.

Mom and Edith have been out to morning tea at Mrs Kissicks. Nothing from Uitenhage this week. Dot does not refer to the film. Suppose she forgot to mention it. Hope it was a success. Hope you are all well.

Lots of love,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday November 26th, 1941

My dear All,

It has been a very trying week, extremes of heat and cold nights. Sunday the heat registered 101 in the shade and yesterday it was 24 degrees lower. Sunday night it was so hot that even a sheet seemed a burden. Since then blankets have been needed. My cold has given a good deal of trouble. I have spasms of coughing which are very distressing whilst they last. However it seems to be easing off a bit now.

Edith has been staying with Olive since Monday morning. At the end of this week she goes to Mrs Hartman's at Buffelshoek – about seven miles south – for a week and then goes to Uncle Jack for some time and will be visiting around Fish River for some few weeks.

We hear from Mrs Halse that her daughter, Molly, has married again in East London and is very happy. Mrs Halse is on holiday at the Wilderness and Cape Town. Molly is the only one left of her family of five.

We also had a letter from Mrs Ambler recently. She says she may be staying at manager of the institution. Both Mrs Halse and Mrs Ambler nearly celebrated their golden weddings. Letters of congratulations still come in. Rev Hornabrook, who is 93 and is the eldest minister in South Africa, wrote us such a nice letter.

Joyce and Raymond look to go to Cape Town on December 9th and will be spending most of January at Sea Point with Aunt Emmie, who by the last news from her has not been at all well. Fortunately Gladys is near her. She is now staying with Mrs Armstrong again. Blodwen's sisters have taken over the house Aunt Emmie has just vacated.

We have heard of a Johannesburg lady who wants a furnished house with three bedrooms and garden for six months from the end of January next. She has her companion and servant and a daughter who is working in Port Elizabeth. She is coming to see us on Friday but so far Mom does not seem to care to entertain the idea of letting her have this house. It would give us an opportunity of paying a round of visits which I have long hoped to do. However we shall see.

I have been busy addressing my Xmas cards the last few days but shall not post them before about the 18th December. The overseas ones have gone already.

Mary has been to Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth within the last few days. This afternoon she is at the bio with Mom at a show on behalf of Rocklands. My Council meeting last night was not over until 11 p.m. so I am tired today.

Letter from Dot and a postcard reporting the safe arrival of a son – David – to Gwen and Leslie. Great rejoicings. Dot says the film show is a great success. They saw the pictures twice. She says perhaps they may go to Kroonstad about Xmas. Reg has been elected on their Town Council. Congratulations.

I am not sure if I have mentioned that Joe is looking to go to Douglas for Xmas and takes Roy with him. Blodwen expects to go to Cape Town with Merle and Trevor. The children have had some sort of skin trouble – very itchy. No word from them this week or from Douglas or Grace. Hope Denis has done well in his exams. Had a nice letter from Rex recently. Says Lynne is to have her holiday soon. He is working very hard. We shall of course see Joe and Roy when they pass through. This time next month Xmas Day will be behind us. How time is flying. I must not stop to write more today but hope you all keep well and that the blessing of good soaking rains will soon fall where it is so much needed. Lots of love to each and all,

Dad

Wednesday December 3rd, 1941
34 Dundas Street, Cradock

My dear All,

I am glad to be able to report that our colds are much better and that one instead of six hankies is sufficient for our needs at present. Mom has occasional fits of sneezing etc but that is probably due to a touch of hay fever. The weather is still very trying – hot and cold and no rain.

The lady who wanted a furnished house for six months came to see us on Friday morning. She is a retired Transvaal teacher who lost her husband in the last war. She has two married sons, both over six feet, and a daughter of 27 working in Port Elizabeth. She left the D.R. Church on account of politics and attends the Methodist Church. She says her military and teacher's pension is not sufficient to pay the rent which I asked (£18) which I reduced to £15. She was pleased with the house and perhaps will communicate later. However she did not want it before the end of January or later. The prospect of taking a trip to the sea and round to your various homes is again knocked on the head for the present at any rate.

This morning we are both attending the Licensing Court. The ministers of the various churches approached the Council some time ago regarding the state of drunkenness amongst the non European population in town and asked for assistance in getting the hours of sale reduced on Fridays and Saturdays. We hope the Court will be sympathetic.

We did not hear from Joe or Blodwen all last week which was quite unusual. We began to fear that the children were perhaps worse but a letter yesterday does not even mention their being ill at all and says they are off to Cape Town – Blodwen, Merle and Trevor – on Thursday 11th and Joe and Roy on Saturday 13th for Vryburg. So that sounds alright. We are thankful that they are all well. We hope they will all have a good time. Joyce and Raymond leave on Tuesday 11th for Cape Town and will spend about a month at Sea Point with Aunt Emmie, who by the way has not been very well lately. One of Ray's playmates has gone down with an attack of Scarlet Fever and they are naturally hoping this will not upset their holiday plans.

Edith went to Mrs Hartman's on Saturday for a week. We had Uncle Dudley, Kate Dudley and her mother to breakfast on Saturday morning. They took Mary with them after breakfast as far as Aunt Jessie. We had Mrs Hartman and old Mrs Trollip, who is 93, and her daughter, Mrs George Rayner, to dinner the same day.

The last few days I have been rearranging the back veranda as an office. It was remarked during the festivities that my desk was not as tidy in the dining room as it should be so I am trying to make my office on the back stoep. The floor has been oiled and the table on which we had the flowers for the photograph at the end and the cupboard in which I have my scrap books where the table stood. I think it will be very convenient but the snag is that it gets very hot and I can only use it early in the morning and late afternoons.

Tomorrow is Lynne's 20th birthday. I think she is on holiday at present. Two grandchildren come of age next year – Denis and Lynne.

On Sunday afternoon I paid my usual official visit to the hospital and was surprised to find that a Miss Butler was a patient. I at once thought it might be Aunt Eliza but found it was Ernest's daughter, Joan. We were at the Poplars on Friday evening for a reading circle and Mary was attending to Joan who had a backache. It appears she was taken worse on Saturday and removed to hospital about 8.30 p.m. She was operated on almost immediately for appendicitis. Am glad to say she is getting on nicely but it was only taken just in time.

All my Xmas cards are now ready for posting.

I am sending each of you a card with the names on if you care to stick it at the bottom of the group. If you are having it framed, it will look better under the glass.

I must tell you a dream I recently had. I dreamed that Cull and Kew sent me an account for £60 odd which of course I did not owe. At the end of November I received their account but instead of it being £60, it was just over £30. Just half of the amount I had dreamed about. Of course it was a mistake. They had added someone else's account to mine..

Joe writes that he gave the children of the Railway Orphanage a real treat in showing them the film he took of them some time ago. They were thrilled. He put the film through the machine about half a dozen times. I did not know if he is taking the film with him to Vryburg but expect he is.

Ruth writes that they went to Nahoon Mouth with Denis. His address is c/o Mr Hunt, Nahoon River Mouth Tea Rooms, East London. We shall all be anxious to see the results of his exam. No doubt he has done well. Ruth and John look to spend a few days at Port Elizabeth for Xmas. Milner is at Standerton and May at her parents' home, Immigrant Station. Dick is in Port Elizabeth. Grace hopes that Reg and Dot and family will come to Kroonstad for Xmas. They think of camping at the river. Grace says the river is very low at present. They have not had rain either. No letters from Vryburg up to the present but I see by the Stellander that some farms in the Kuruman district are killing their cattle as there is no food for them in the veldt. The children are busy with their exams. Hope they all do well. Dot writes her usual cheery letter. They had been to Pietersburg for ambulance tents and seen satisfied with the results.

We do not know the result of the Licensing Court as the Board went into committee to consider the matter.

Schools break up next week but some children leave as soon as the exams are finished.

We are not making any plans for Xmas at present.

We have been invited to the Public tennis courts this afternoon to a farewell to Joan but as she is in hospital, the presentation will have to be held over. She was a good player. Alison told me this morning that she is getting on nicely.

There is a nice breeze blowing this afternoon but no rain. We still have rainwater in our tanks but it is getting low.

We want to bath before going to the tennis tea so must stop and finish off with the post. Lots of love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday December 10th, 1941

My dear All,

Today is Grace and Ted's 17th Anniversary of their Wedding Day. We all hope they may be spared to reach their Golden Wedding.

Please note that I am giving up the Post Office Box as from the end of this month. We find it inconvenient to send the boy for it and not being obliged to go up town daily, it will save my time and energy. I can take it on again if I find it necessary.

You will be sorry to hear that Raymond developed Measles last Friday. Joyce and he were booked to leave for six weeks at Cape Town yesterday a.m. but the doctor was called in on Saturday and pronounced it was Measles and not Scarlet Fever, as was at first thought the trouble was. This will put off their departure for about a fortnight. We are very sorry indeed for them. They had booked accommodation at Sea Point for the month of January.

Edith returned from Mrs Hartman's on Saturday morning. She enjoyed her visit. Mrs Hartman stays quite alone on the farm. She has a manager and his wife and family a little away from her house. She comes to town every Saturday. Enid and Gladys came in by car for Edith yesterday afternoon. Gladys has two nice little children, a boy and a girl. Her husband is on service still in the Union. Shortly after they left, Norma Hickett (Mrs Watson of Alice) drove up. She and her three children are staying at Groen Kloof with George and Hilda. We had invited them to come and stay with us before returning home but they say it cannot be done. However they stayed to supper and waited for George and Hilda, who had gone over to Queenstown to fetch their youngest son from school. Norma is as sweet as ever. I think I have told you that she was the smallest child in the Sunday School at Vryburg and was deputed to make the presentation of the silver entre dish which the Sunday School gave after ten years of being the Superintendent. We still have the dish in daily use. They left again for the farm about seven.

I think I told you last week that Joan (Ernest's daughter) was in hospital.

I am posting 450 cards to South African friends this morning. Those for overseas were posted a few weeks ago.

Letters from Joe and Blodwen report the children back at school. They were only out of school for three days so they are able to carry out their plans for the holidays as arranged. I hope to see Joe and Roy as they pass here on Saturday night for Vryburg.

I am glad to say that I am still able to continue shaving myself without any serious consequences. I am still losing weight slightly. The heat last Saturday was 103 in the shade and the following day it dropped to 81. Still no rain.

We have received a very nice letter from Molly Halse who has married again. She seems very happy. A nice letter also to hand from Herbert Tilbrook near Umtali. He and Mrs Tilbrook took a two months holiday to the Cape and visited many of their relations on the return trip. He has been laid up since his return.

There was not time at the Golden Wedding for you to go through the photographs I wanted you to do so I am hoping shortly to send to each of you an envelope containing snaps which you may like to have and perhaps your children or their children may like to keep. I think I have duplicates of all or at least most of them. I still have many pictures which perhaps I may find time to add to my scrap books.

Schools break up tomorrow. Tonight we are invited to the breaking up at the Convent and also the Boys School and shall probably go to the latter. Last evening I went to a lecture by the Jewish Rabbi, his subject being "towards Jewish-Christian Understanding". It was an excellent address. The room was filled with interested listeners.

Grace writes that they are going to stay in town for two weeks as Mrs Lutz has offered them her house. They go in on Saturday 13th. They experienced a terrible hail storm last Sunday – the day we had it so cold – followed by dust storms. The children have finished their exams and hope they have done well. Pat Irons' two children may be going to them in the New Year.

Douglas writes that he, Evelyn and Lynne spent a week in Johannesburg and Pretoria last week. The drilling machine engine had to be repaired. The country is all very dry. He hears that the Meteorologist says that general rains cannot be expected before the end of January. Lynne is on holiday. Mike Meyer has a further six months leave but cannot get his discharge. Evelyn says the water restrictions in Pretoria are severe and the gardens are looking miserable.

No letter from Dot this week, suppose the extra traffic on the railways has upset things. A Xmas card from Uitenhage this morning but no letter.

Mary has been nursing old Mr Metcalf for about a week. He is getting over a severe cold. Mary hopes to be able to spend a week at the Hogs Back leaving here on the evening of Xmas Day.

I am indeed sorry to see that the war has spread to Japan. The news at dinner time that the Prince of Wales has been sunk is a serious blow to the Navy. Our South African troops in Libya have also had a nasty setback. I am still of the opinion that the war will come to a sudden end when those who are fighting against us really know the truth.

I am glad to say both of us are better of our colds. We are back to normal conditions and have no visitors in view at present. We hope Joe will arrange to break his return journey here after visiting Vryburg.

We have had our first taste of figs this season the last few days. They are not quite ripe yet. A good rain would do a lot of good. We still have enough rainwater for baths but may have to switch over to the town supply if we do not get rain. Restrictions for the use of water for gardening have again been imposed.

It seems that crowds of residents are going away for the holidays so the town will be very quiet.

I hope to be able to write at least one more letter before Xmas but the postal arrangements may be out of gear as they often are at this season of the year. I will close by wishing all of you a happy season in your respective homes. May peace and good will remain with you all. Count your blessings, for we all have so much to be thankful for.

With very dear love to each and all as though named,

Yours lovingly

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
as Wednesday December 17th, 1941

My dear All,

It is Tuesday afternoon and as we may be going to morning tea at Olive's in the morning, I must get a move on. It is her birthday and she is always good to us in taking us for spins now and then that it is a pleasure to do anything for her. Mary was going with us but she informs us that she is going to a heart case in the morning at Middelburg. She has been nursing old Mr Metcalf for nearly a fortnight - bad cold - and he is getting better. She hopes to spend a week at the Hogsback after Xmas Day if she can get away from her case. We had asked Uncle Walter and Olive to come to us for Xmas dinner but it is probably they will be going to Cyril's farm. However this morning we have received an invitation to Grass Ridge for Xmas and we think we will go.

We are hoping that Joe and Roy are at Douglas'. I did not go over to the station on Saturday night as Mom thought I could not manage it. I was very disappointed as I don't know when we shall see him as he looks to return via Cape Town, picking up - not literally of course - Blodwen and the children. They will travel by the Garden Route.

Raymond is much better and they are leaving for Cape Town on Monday morning arriving the following day, just as they are having their first trial blackout in Cape Town. He seems to have a mild attack like baby Charles. We hope Grace and family are having a good time staying in Kroonstad for part of the holidays. Hope they have had more rain. I see that Potgietersrus had a couple of inches recently. We had ten points last weekend - all we have had this month so far. The total for the year will be far below the average unless a good deal falls between now and the end of the month.

Dot reports that Teddy Browne was due back on leave last week. She also saw Harold's friend, Hammerslag, in Pietersburg recently.

Rev Legg writes giving us a pressing invitation to visit them if we should go to see the Colletts at Umzimkulu - where we have also been invited, but it seems very doubtful if we shall ever go away. A letter from Herbert Tillbrook at Umtali says he was laid up in hospital after they had spent a couple of months visiting the Cape, Vryburg etc.

Quite a number of Xmas cards have come to hand. One from Miss Kelly from Liverpool. She used to be at Cape Town and we saw a good deal of her. She is nursing at the Liverpool Infirmary. Joe looks to go to Cape Town about the third of January., their address will be Onze Rust, Albion Road, Rondebosch. Roy has passed into Standard 2 and Merle into Standard 1. we have not heard how Dot's boys have got on but quite well I expect.

Joan Butler is out of hospital but of course will have to be careful for some time. Barbara Collett has given up her teaching job and is taking on V.A. work, thus all three of Uncle Gervase's girls are, or will be, away from home. I wonder if Uncle Norman's and Uncle Jack's sons have been in the recent fighting lines. I think I told you that Uncle Walter's grandson, Herbert Duncan, had died up north.

Wednesday morning, 17th. Olive's birthday. Dingaans Day, has passed off without any untoward incident so far as I have heard. Thank goodness. Mary has been called to Middelburg and left this morning by train. Our figs are ripening quite fast and we are giving them away. The grapes do not seem to be as plentiful as last year but perhaps it is too soon to judge. We were at Aunt Eliza's last evening. Joyce hopes to leave on Monday morning. Cape Town is to have a trial blackout on Tuesday night. That certainly brings the war nearer to South Africa.

Denis writes that he is having a good holiday at Nahoon Mouth. Grace reports some rain but not enough. Is liking her stay in town. Is hoping Reg and Dot will be going there for Xmas. Nothing from Douglas or Joe so far but hope to hear soon.

If we go to Grass Ridge for Xmas, it may upset our posting the usual dear all. Perhaps we might stay over Sunday but then there is the watering of the garden etc. In any case we do hope each family will have a very happy time and that the spirit of Christmas be largely in evidence. No one can say what may happen before the next Xmas comes round. My wish for all is that we may be prepared for whatever is in store. Love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday December 24th, 1941

My dear All,

We are rapidly coming to the end of the year and everyone is hoping that the New Year will bring the looked for peace in the world. Here in South Africa we have hardly felt the effect of the war when we compare how those in other parts of the world are suffering. Surely it must call forth all that is within us to count our blessings for all the mercies we have been favoured with.

We have not heard from Joe yet but in a letter from Evelyn, she says he had gone with Douglas to see a windmill erected and Roy had gone with Arthur and Kingsley to Mayong. Some experience for Roy. Blodwen writes that she had a very comfortable journey down. Has seen Aunt Emmie who is looking very thin and is getting very deaf. Joyce left by early train on Monday and no doubt is safely in Cape Town. I saw her and Raymond off. I wonder how they have got on with the blackout.

Mr and Mrs Blunsom turned up on Thursday afternoon just after we had had our afternoon tea. Their son and daughter were with them. We soon got tea for them and they stayed to supper. They were on their way by car to Pretoria to see their other daughter who is on service. Their eldest son is reported missing up north. I took them out to the warm bath where they camped for the night. They left about mid-day Friday.

George Byrnes' grandson is reported killed in Libya. He was only 24. We also see by the Northern News that Douglas Crosbie died whilst on holiday from heart failure. Mr St Quinton I see has also passed on. He was a good age.

You will be surprised to hear that we have had such a nice letter from Madge Masson. She is now Mrs Hearn and is living in Mafeking. She is doing night duty at the hospital. Her children are at school and her husband is farming in the Transvaal. She says she stayed in Cradock when her parents were living at the Premier boarding house. If any of you are in Mafeking, do look her up. As you know, she and Harold were great chums.

Congratulations to Reg and Dot on their two boys doing so well in their exams. More power to them. Roy and Merle have both been moved up too. Alan sang a solo "still the night" at their Sunday School party.

Ruth and her husband are going to Port Elizabeth for a few days. Hope they will have better weather than has prevailed there for sometime. Denis is still at East London - Nahoon Mouth. He goes to Potchefstroom early in January. Mary is still employed at Middelburg and phoned to say she would not be able to go to Hogs Back as arranged. I have seen Mr Metcalf a couple of times recently. He is getting better slowly.

We leave after morning service (7.30). Mr Weavers is having service at Fish River at nine so there will not be much time to spare. Mom and I go on to Grass Ridge after service and look to return home on Monday or Tuesday.

Later. No post from any of the family today but hope all are well. We are not having our post redirected to Fish River so everything will have to accumulate here until our return. Of course we may find some letters at Grass Ridge when we arrive tomorrow. Needless to say we shall be thinking of you all and wish we could join the happy throng. We have had lots of cards and letters - more than last year. Aunt Kate Owen is in Port Elizabeth but hopes to be home for the New Year. She says that perhaps Freda may be down at Redlands. Have invited her to stay with us if she can come to town.

The weather today is much nicer than it has been this week but no rain since Sunday night. So far we are about six inches below our average for the year. Mrs Dodd and Nessie and May may be coming this afternoon. We have not seen May since she was married at Cape town. Her husband is up north. Hope you all have a very happy time and that there will be no regrets afterwards.

Lots of love to each and all,
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock
Wednesday, December 31st, 1941

My dear All,

Christmas has come and gone for another year. I am sure that all of us are hoping and praying that long before next Xmas comes round, this troubled world will be at peace once more. The year has been an eventful one for all of us and I trust we are all very thankful for the many blessings we have received, unworthy as we have been.

We shall of course be interested in hearing how each family have spent the time. Dot sent a card saying they had been alone for the first time for some years but had had a picnic supper at which a number of friends had gathered. They are indeed fortunate in having such a nice circle of friends.

I attended early morning service (7.30) on Xmas Day and Mom came along to the church in time to go straight out with Rev Weavers to Fish River where he had arranged to hold service at nine. There were good attendances at both, especially Fish River where there were between 60 and 70. Collections were taken at each on behalf of the March Memorial Homes at Rondebosch, the total being about £10. Mr Weavers had breakfast with us at seven, Mrs Weavers being away at Port Elizabeth. Aunt Jessie, Mr Barnes, Uncle Norman, Gladys, Dick and Ethnie and Neville's fiancée, Nancy Cuyler, were there to dinner. Everything was very nice and greatly enjoyed. In the afternoon, Uncle Gervase, Barbara, Roslin and Hope and of course, Aunt Roena, came up for tennis. The heat was intense. Mr Weavers had dinner with Uncle Jack but came up in the afternoon and went on to Groen Kloof and later back to town. The installation of electric light since we were last at Grass Ridge is a great improvement. We occupied the large spare room - about 20 to 25 feet square. Needless to say, we were very comfortable. I forgot to mention that Aunt Kate's mother, Mrs Jubb, is staying with them for the present. She is over 80. In the evening we had music and played "can you go". At 5.30 a.m. each day Aunt Kate brought us tea for Mom and a cup of milk for me. She rises at five daily and makes the bread and butter before breakfast. By ten, her work is practically done. She does an enormous amount of knitting for the soldiers. I took out a few tools with me and was able to do a few little jobs about the house, including putting a new lock on the kitchen door which has been out of order for some time. Mrs Beth Rayner and some of her children and Nessie Dodds' children came down from Groen Kloof on Friday for morning tea and we went up there the following afternoon. Mr and Mrs Willie Brown are staying with George and Hilda for a while. We had not seen them for some years. Mr Brown says he has not been to Vryburg since 1918. He is suffering from diabetes and Mrs Brown does not seem at all well. It was nice to see them again and talk over old Vryburg days. Mrs Dodd and Kay were there for Xmas Day but we did not see them. Sunday was spent quietly. In the afternoon, Mom and I walked to the cemetery. Clouds came up and there was an appearance of rain in the direction of Hofmeyr and Lions Hill. The heat was terrific.

Monday morning Uncle Dudley brought us to Fish River station and we caught the 8.30 a.m. train for town. We have enjoyed the change and rest. The apricots are plentiful and sound. There are a few strawberries but I am not allowed to touch them. Gardening with the severity of the drought is hard work and often very disheartening. Aunt Katie is so fond of flowers etc and does her best. I am pretty sure we spent our first Xmas after our marriage at Grass Ridge. The old flower garden where the wedding group was taken has grown out of all recognition. The wagon-house in which we were married is the same as ever but the old outbuildings - the original home - have been renovated and made into useful outhouses. We are always made very welcome there.

The maid did not turn up on Monday but came yesterday as usual. The garden boy was here but he is not much use.

We have received a larger number of greetings this year than last and some very nice letters of appreciation. My former typist at the YMCA, who married a farmer in the Barkley East area, has lost her baby girl and the farm has been sold and they have gone to the Transvaal. She asks for a testimonial as she wants to get back into work again. Mrs Dennison Browne sends greetings from Umtali.

Mrs Hurndall, former matron at Louis Botha House, sends particulars of some of the boys who were resident there in my time. A number of them are up north. Her son, Bedford, is supervisor of detonators and her daughter is senior nurse at Rondebosch hospital. Her mother is still living. An Afrikaans couple writes thanking us for our card and say "your cards each year mean a lot to us. I seems to carry a message of comfort specially written for us". Rev Jennings writes that Lorry is in the navy. Lt Bill Hart is in technical service at Durban. Cliff Kotze is a Sergeant in Kimberley Regiment. Mr Jennings is living at Plumstead, Cape. Harry Dennison, who retired to Port Shepstone a year or two ago, has had to return to Mahalapye as the younger members had gone to the front. Your cousin Phil Butler sends greetings and congratulations on our Golden Wedding. A nice letter from his Mother also came to hand recently. I returned to her a number of photos of their family which she was pleased to have. Aunt Kate Owen has been in Port Elizabeth by doctors orders. She expected to be home for New Year but have not heard if she has returned yet. they are expecting Freda and children at Rooispruit but have not heard if they have arrived. Nice letter from the Miss Wookey at Glen Una and one from Miss Pavit at Vryburg. So you see we have quite a number of friends from all over the place.

Later. Letter from Grace telling of Xmas. They are back on the plot now. Had a couple of Air Force boys for a few days. The weather was kinder to them than to us. It was quite cool Gay says. Letter from Aunt Emmie says Joe is expected at Cape Town yesterday. Auntie is looking forward to seeing Joe's films. We wonder when Joe and Blodwen will be back in Uitenhage.

A postcard from Ruth this morning brings the good news that Denis had passed his final B.A. in Honours in history and has won a Beit scholarship. This is very encouraging. He passed through Cradock on Saturday night for some weeks training at Potchefstroom. Shall go over to see him.

Later still. Edith, Enid and Harvey Brown's little girl, Una, had dinner with us just now. They report all well at Fish River.. The are returning later in the afternoon. There must have been some rain nearby as today it is just delightful writing on the back stoep. It is over 20 degrees cooler than yesterday, for which I am devoutly thankful.

We have invited Aunt Charlotte to dinner tomorrow, New Year's Day. Shall have to send a taxi for her and send her back in one. Rev Weavers will also have dinner with us. Edith is spending some time at Grass Ridge and looks to return to East London on January 30th. Mom has just gone to see Uncle Walter and Olive who has her sister and brother-in-law, Daniels, staying with them for a few days.

Enid, Edith and Harvey Brown's little girl have had dinner with us today. Have just left. They are having a dinner party at Kat Kop on New Year's Day.

I must now close, wishing all of you a very happy New Year and may the blessing of peace soon be restored to this troubled world.

Yours affectionately,
Dad