

Handwritten notation: "Re-read at Grass Ridge, Vryburg, 17/11/1947, CB"

At Kroonstad  
April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1932

My dear All

As you see I did not bring my Corona typewriter with me from Cape Town. I found I had quite enough without it. I do not think I have written a letter – only postcards – and not many of those. I do not expect I shall find time to write about General Meeting until later on, so will only now try to describe our journey after leaving Inchanga. We left there on Monday afternoon with all our luggage and Mary and Wallis as passengers as far as Maritzburg. We slept in town (at a boarding house) that night and intended starting early for Howick Falls, Ladysmith and hoping to reach Harrismith the same evening. We were delayed in starting having to sort a few matters so we had breakfast and got on the road by 8.30. We found the road out of Maritzburg very hilly with many sharp turns which necessitated going in low gear with the result that the radiator water frequently boiled so of course we stopped frequently and admired the scenery whilst the engine cooled down. I had a two gallon drum of water which came in useful. The scenery is very grand all the way to Ladysmith. Howick was reached in an hour (15 miles). There was a lot of water going over the falls. We were reminded of Joe's photo of the spot taken some years ago. The country was beautifully green and the undulating country was well worth seeing. We reached Estcourt just at one and stayed here an hour and a half as I wanted to see the Town Clerk (K M Pilcher), whom I had met at S.O.E. conferences. We enjoyed a couple of meat pies for dinner and off again passing through Colenso and arriving at Ladysmith at 4.45. Being so far east the sun set early and as did not like to try to cross the Van Reenen Pass in the approaching night, we decided to stay the night. We took the advantage of an offer of a garage man who took the wheel and drove us over the chief points of interest in connection with the historic siege. We found a comfortable boarding house "The Firs" and were glad to turn in fairly early having covered 121 miles that day.

We arranged to make an early start for the Pass, in the hope of being able to reach Kroonstad the same evening. A good deal of rain fell during the night but being hilly we expected it would be fairly dry. For the most part this was so, but in some places where the road was fairly level we found the car skidding occasionally. I used the rope with which the car had been tied fast in the railway truck round the back wheels and this did the trick and we made great progress. The rope, however, did not last for many miles. The friction on the road soon wore it out and we had to throw it away. The road up the Pass is a wonderful piece of engineering and the scenery will take a lot of beating. We managed most of the climb on top and second gear. In some places the road was badly washed out but by no means impassable. We relished a good cup of tea and scones when we reached the top of the Pass. This we had at the hotel, in the garden, and the proprietress was very keen on our spending a few days there. Certainly one could be very comfortable and happy there. The air was delightful and makes an ideal holiday resort. We wired to Ted's place from here saying we might arrive the same evening.

We reached Harrismith – at the foot of the mountain about one and did not stay long and made for Bethlehem. We noticed a great difference in the roads and veldt as soon as we got into the Free State. The roads are better, straighter, and well kept. The veldt is not as green and there is a greater absence of bees. Hill climbing is a thing of the past and we were able to make good progress. Sheep and mealies appear to be the principal farming. The oxen and cows which we saw were in good condition and free from ticks.

We left Bethlehem at 4 having covered about 20 miles. Our next stop was Senekal (40 miles). The roads were so good that we debated whether we would attempt the last lap (70 miles) to Kroonstad or wait till the morning. It was 6 pm and mother seemed game so off we went. It soon got dark but the car lights were perfect and we sped along quite easily. We had a little difficulty in finding the road at Steynsrus as it was dark by then but when once on it there was no difficulty. We experienced a novel sight on the road in meeting a flock of sheep being driven to town. It was at a

slight bend in the road and headlights shone brightly into hundreds of sheep's eyes. They looked like pearls and it was a sight not easily to be forgotten.

Kroonstad, like all S.A. towns lies in a hollow. We reached the outskirts at 8.45 pm and it was a very pretty sight as the town is very well lit. We could not find the road leading out to Ted's house so crossed the bridge and phoned to him to come and meet us. This delayed us a little while at the bridge and Mom had her first touch of sea sickness. Ted came on his push bike and we loaded that on the running board and were soon home having covered 229 miles in the day. This is my longest day's run. The children were in bed and it was not long before we were. Grace and Ted had decided to give us up if we did not arrive before 9.

Thursday and Friday we did practically nothing, leaving Mother to get over the journey. A few visitors called and I did some shopping, had the car looked over and replenished with oil, grease etc.

On Saturday Ted managed to get off early by 10 so we all went to Parys for the day. There were four grownups and four children. This is on the main road to Johannesburg and is a favourite holiday resort. The township is straggling but we found a very pretty place to outspan on the banks of the river. Here we soon had our midday meal and Ted took his primas stove and we had a good feed and rest under the trees. The river is fairly wide and has a number of islands in it. The children were interested in watching cows swim from one island to another. We afterwards went into the village and soon found the main camping site. The Municipality has provided a number of picnic places for visitors. There is good boating and bathing and children's pools, swings etc. Here we had our evening meal and left about 5 for our 60 mile return journey. We got home safely without incident except that one of the children was a little seasick.

So far I have omitted to mention two important events. While at Inchanga, we received (on Easter Monday) a call stating that my brother Joe's wife (Aunt Sophia) died a few days previously. She has been an invalid for some years and has reached over 80 years of age. We all hope Uncle Joe will see his way to come out here for a change and expect he will be changing residence before long. Their home was much too large for them.

The other item of news was to hear that Joe had gone to Cape Town and was getting married on March 31<sup>st</sup> to Blodwen. When we saw him at Bloemfontein, as we passed through, he was uncertain what to do at Easter, either to go to Vryburg or C.T. He chose the latter. We wired at once our good wishes and have since had letters from them. In fact I am now writing this from their temporary home.

To return to our narrative. We went to Wesleyan Church both morning and evening and visited the hospital as well. In the afternoon the Pierces – neighbours of Grace's – came over to afternoon tea. Strange to say, Mr Pierce's father was a teacher at Croydon School in my time but knew Uncle James better. He must be fairly old now. We also met Mr Mullins at church. We knew him in Cradock many years ago.

We decided to leave Kroonstad on Monday afternoon for Bloemfontein. We left at 1.45 and had a good run of 145 miles in 5¾ hours, including stoppages. We left our thermos with tea at Grace's by mistake but they sent it over by train.

### **At Rooispruit 10/4/32**

We have covered a good many miles since I wrote the above few lines and there has not been any opportunity of completing our story or bringing it up to date.

**Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1932**  
**Cape Town**

It seems hardly worthwhile attempting to catch up with the story of our holiday. It has been impossible to do any writing during the past weeks as wherever we have been it has been a case of seeing people and passing on to the next as soon as possible. Let me here state that we returned to Cape Town on Thursday afternoon, according to plan, and have been busy ever since. However I will try and do my best.

The run from Kroonstad was not very interesting, the country is flat, the roads are good and there is very little to see along the road. I may now say that travelling through the whole length of the Free State there was not a tree along the road or a suitable place alongside of the road where we could outspan in comfort and enjoy the shade of a tree.

The sun had set by time we reached Bloemfontein and we did not know the position of Joe's new lodgings, consequently we went a little out of our way before we reached the house. We found them in the road waiting for us and they at once recognised the tooting of the motor horn as we approached. We were made very welcome and as accommodation had been provided for us exactly opposite their rooms, it was very convenient. We had our meals with them, which made it nicer still. At present they have one room at the place where Joe has been staying for some time. The people are very nice and for the time being they will stay there, until they can find a more suitable place.

Work at the Railway workshops is very slack. Joe went as usual on the Tuesday morning but as there was nothing doing – he did not even light his forge – he decided to take the afternoon off. We therefore called for Mrs Webb and Cousin Edith Collett (Sister Collett) and took them for a spin up Naval Hill and to the swimming baths. These baths are noted in the Union as by some special process of filtration the water is never changed, but keeps on circulating through filters. Bloemfontein is also noted for its beautiful gardens and zoo. We did not have time to see these on this visit but saw them when we were here last year.

At Joe's suggestion and invitation we arranged to have a sort of wedding breakfast at a private hotel where Mrs Webb's daughter was staying. Instead of its being a breakfast it was a dinner. The party consisted of Joe and Blodwen, Mom and I, Mrs Webb and daughter and Sister Collett. No speeches followed but we had a very enjoyable time. Afterwards we all adjourned to Mr Webb's house and chatted on the stoep.

We decided that we had far too much luggage with us in the car, two suitcases, hat box, stretcher bed in case of having to sleep out at nights, three attaché cases, tin box for food along the road, two bundles, holdalls besides various car spare parts. We carried two spare wheels, two 2 gallon tins, one for water and the other full of petrol besides a lean-to tent for covering the car or for sleeping in. We sent back one suitcase, the stretcher bed and my holdall full of spare clothing etc. Even then we had more than sufficient for our immediate needs.

Joe and Blodwen wanted us to stay longer in Bloemfontein. We had planned originally to leave early but yielded to their wishes and waited for Joe to come home at midday when we bade the happy couple goodbye and God's blessing on their future. We hope they will soon find comfortable and suitable quarters where they can begin in earnest to realise their responsibilities.

We left at 1 pm and passed Reddersburg (41 miles) at 2.30. At Edenburg we experienced our first puncture. I had stopped outside the public offices to enquire the way and on restarting, found one of the back wheels flat. A native boy who was passing at the time assisted in changing the wheel and we were soon on the way again. At Trompsburg we filled up with petrol and I enquired of the garage man if he knew Mr Billingham who used to live in Cradock and afterwards in Vryburg, and I think he died there. The man knew him very well. I should also record the fact that at Winburg we enquired if Mr Irons senior was remembered. Ted's father was in business there during the Boer War, and if I am not mistaken was ruined by the War. The party I spoke to remembered him very well and pointed out the shop he used to occupy.

We arrived at Philippolis at 6.30 having done 132 miles. We decided to stay the night. It must be over 40 years since I was in this place for the first time. I was then travelling by cart and horses for Butler & Wilkie and had come up from Colesberg in the hopes of doing business. I was not aware that a commercial traveller needed a licence and shortly after laying out my samples, a policeman came along and demanded my licence. I did not consider that it was worth £25 so packed up and returned to Venterstad. I remember this so well because my horses knocked up on the return journey. The hotel is the only one in the village and is very inferior at that. I do not think it has improved since I was there so many years ago except that it has its own electric light installed. There are no lights in the streets and being tired, we retired early.

We left at a quarter past eight the next morning for Colesberg and did the 38 miles in an hour and a half.

At Colesberg we intended calling on Mrs Morgan, formerly Miss Wheakley with whom I have been doing business in eggs for the hostel for some years. Fortunately we phoned to her farm, about 15 miles out, and found she was away at Cape Town so of course we did not go. It is a good many years since I was in Colesberg. Uncle James' partner, after leaving the Cradock business, joined another old schoolfellow, Mr Irving Gibbs and started business there at Wilkie & Gibbs. Mrs Gibbs was an old friend of our family in London, Susie Robinson by name. They lost their first baby in Colesberg and I thought it would be nice if we visited it. Whilst at the post office we got into conversation with an old resident, Mrs Moore, who remembered the Gibbs and was able to direct us approximately to the spot. She remembered the spot as her father, Mr Weddle, died about the same time and was buried near the same plot. We found his tombstone but could not find any trace of Mrs Gibbs' child's grave. The cemetery has been abandoned as a burial plot for some years and is in a very dilapidated condition.

After refuelling the car and ourselves we left for George Wilkies' farm in Springfield in the Steynsburg district. We could not find it on the route but from directions, we understood it was about 20 miles out from the town and that it was necessary to go right into Steynsburg. Here we found the telephone very handy and got into touch with Wilkies before we started. So long as we travelled on the main road the going was easy, though we noticed a considerable change for the worse as soon as we crossed from the Free State at Colesberg bridge into the Cape Province. We were directed to turn off the main road at a certain gate where we should see an iron standard driven into the ground on which people hung their post bags. Fortunately we met a car at this particular gate otherwise we should probably have missed it. I think it would have been better in the long run if we had stuck to the main road and done the extra mileage. Progress was slow and the road awful. Farm roads are an abomination to motorists. We found our way but the 56 miles took us four hours to negotiate.

We had a very hearty welcome from George Wilkie and his wife. They have two little girls of their own, the first one was born after six years of married life. They had previously adopted a little boy, we did not see him as he was away at school. We of course knew George's father, Uncle James' partner, but had never met the son. In our young married days we had nursed this young man's cousin who had come out from England and was staying at Daggaboer with the Wilkies. This was in Cradock days. Old Mr & Mrs Alexander had visited the Wilkies some years ago and had stayed some time there. George Wilkie is not a Friend but his father was. Old Mrs Wilkie was Uncle Joe Maskell's sister and cousin of Moms. We were interested in visiting their graves. The homestead is in need of a good deal of repairs which no doubt will be done on the return of better times. We saw traces of the Boer War period on a sideboard in the dining room which bears two bullet marks when the Boers fired into the house and very nearly shot Mrs Wilkie. We left Springfield about ten on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> for Uncle Owens, Rooispruit. Here again we encountered bad roads and on one occasion got on the wrong track. We followed what we thought was the main road as we noticed the telephone line went on that road. This led us to a dead end and we had to retrace our steps for a few miles over a very bad road. We subsequently found out that farm was one of Sir Abe Bailey's and that Uncle Owen's daughter and son-in-law – Maude and Mike Meyers – had lived on the place. After getting on the right road we passed two others of Mr Bailey's farms

which were sold a few years ago but had to be taken back owing to the depression and the inability of the new purchasers to pay the instalments. We wished several times that we had someone with us who knew the various places which we passed as it would have been much more interesting. We passed two large sheets of water – dams – which I understand were also Bailey's property. Some day, perhaps, farmers will attach to their gates the names of their places. We noticed this was done in only two or three places which we passed and they were on farms where the owners had sheep for sale. We had another experience of a farm road before we reached Uncle Owen's. For about six miles we crossed the veldt following a mere track. This eventually led us through a fairly deep drift – with water in it – just above Rooispruit. We negotiated it safely and were glad to be at rest and have dinner which had been saved for us. The 46 miles had taken us just on four hours to travel so we cannot be accused of furious driving. Roads did not permit of it.

We were sorry to find that Aunt Kate was away from home – at Port Elizabeth with Beryl under medical treatment. It is hoped that the latest treatment will avoid the necessity of her undergoing further operations. Poor girl she has suffered enough in recent years. Uncle Gervase's wife Rowena and her daughter Roslin were staying at Uncle Owens. The little girl has been a sufferer for some time, having had an operation at the back of her ear and portion of a diseased bone removed. It is feared that in the operation a facial nerve has been damaged which has caused the side of her face to be drawn up. She is undergoing violet ray and massage treatment in Middelburg at present which it is hoped will restore the damage. Otherwise she seems to be in very good health. Maude and Mike Meyers are contemplating farming somewhere between Kimberley and Kuruman. Leslie and his wife and family of two are well. We saw a good deal of them in their sweet little home close to the old folk. The prevailing depression was uppermost in every one's minds and conversation. Farmers have no money and for the most part are unable to sell any produce at profitable prices. What is going to be the end is difficult to see but there can be no doubt that the action of the present government is having a very depressing effect upon the whole country. Speculation is rife amongst all sections of the population as to the probable effect of a general election, should such occur in the near future. From what I could gather from conversations with all sorts and conditions of people was that the nationalist party is so well organised and controlled that in spite of the fact that many of that party being ruined by the present politics they would still vote for the return to power of their party rather than support the South African party whom they hate with an intense hatred. Their party comes first with them and the good of the country second. However, we must wait and see. Never in the 45 years that I have been in the country have things been so bad, and daily they are getting worse. We were sorry to notice as we travelled southwards that locusts were making their appearance. Not in large swarms but in isolated patches. It is to be hoped that this scourge is not coming upon us as well.

Rev W W Douglas, our former minister in Cradock called on his way to conduct service at Steynsburg and had breakfast with us all. It was very pleasant to renew the old friendship. He conducted family worship before leaving. I think he is over 80 and is still going strong. In the afternoon Eric and Freda and the twins and of course Pat came along to see us. They had tea on the lawn and we all went for a walk inspecting the dam, crops etc. Eric is as thin as ever whilst Frieda looks very well indeed. She has just returned from Port Elizabeth where she has been with Beryl. I took Uncle Owen and Rowena and Roslin into Middelburg on the Saturday morning and had tea with cousin Myra Collett whilst the others did some shopping etc. I took the opportunity of calling upon my old friend Mr Creek. He used to make all my boots when I lived in Cradock. He is an organ tuner and a very good man in the Wesleyan church. Unfortunately whilst on one of his business trips in Cradock a few years ago he became stone deaf and has of course had to give up tuning. We had a conversation in writing for some time and he was very pleased that I had called to see him. The town does not seem to have altered very much except in the centre where the market square has been nicely laid out. The hotel where I used to stay in my travelling days has been improved. The post office is insignificant for the size and importance of the district which it serves. The shops are much the same as they were 40 years ago.

Cousin Myra is a daughter of Uncle William Collett and has been in Middelburg for some years. We have not seen her for a very long time. Mom was not with me on this visit so I promised to call on the way back from Cradock. We had originally planned to call on her sister, Mrs Forbes, at Burgersdorp, but the plan had to fall through owing to her, Mrs Forbes, being away. When we came to start on Monday morning for Grass Ridge from Rooispruit we found that one of the back wheels was punctured, a nail sticking fast in the tyre. I think this must have happened just as I was putting the car away on Saturday as it was alright when we returned from Middelburg. This was puncture number two for the trip, and I can now say was the only two we had in the 1405 miles we travelled. As we had not seen very much of Eric and Freda we decided to have breakfast with them. They are within easy distance of the old home. Eric is feeling the depression in business very keenly. Farmers have no money and it is not wise to give credit in these times. He is working single handed in the store and has the responsibility of the post office and telephone exchange as well. He also acts as railway agent as there is no resident official. Both Eric and Freda are well and as for the three children, they are the pictures of health. The twins are very sweet and cause a great deal of amusement and, of course pleasure. Eric has provided them with a very nice seesaw and a play house in the garden where they spend a great deal of their time. They are great favourites with all the friends and relatives there. Leslie's two little girls are also very jolly. When the five are together they make a happy little company. Eric has altered his large dining room since we were last there. It is a decided improvement. His garden is a picture and well repays them for the time and attention given to it. Whilst at breakfast Eric's boy mended the punctured tyre but we had only just got out of sight of the house when we found it was flat again. Evidently on inserting the tube he had pinched it as when we came to examine same at Grass Ridge we found four small holes instead of the one puncture. Mr Gibbon, a neighbour of theirs was passing on horseback at the time and very kindly stopped and helped change the wheel. I forgo to mention that Uncle Owen took us to Mr Gibbon's farm. He specialises in race horses. He has some lovely animals, one horse was stated to have been sold at 10 000 guineas.

We again had to encounter cross roads on our way to Grass Ridge. We passed Uncle Gervace's old home at De Keur but did not call as we did not know the new owners. As we got near to Grass Ridge we had a splendid view of the dam. This was nearly full and the water stands back for about five miles. It is very fortunate that the dam was practically empty at the beginning of the year when there was such heavy rains throughout the eastern province. Had it been full, it is quite probable, so it is stated, that the lower streets of Cradock would have been washed away. At Uncle Herbert's the water was so high that it was feared that his house would be surrounded by water. Aunt Jessie was already with hat on etc ready to flee. Uncle Herbert kept watch until he saw the waters abating and then went to bed. Not a drop of water escaped from the Grass Ridge dam on that occasion. I have digressed somewhat and must return to my story. We arrived at Grass Ridge in time for lunch and received a very hearty welcome from Uncle Dudley and Aunt Kitty. It seems strange to find this two childless couple in the great old home. How a visit to the old home calls back memories. Memories of very many happy days spent under the hospitable roof. Days when the old folk had the bulk of their family around them and what fun we had. Then in later days when the old home was the happy meeting place for the grandchildren to gather. The old rocking horse, which has provided such amusement for countless grandchildren and others, still stands as before on the back stoep. We have photos of our little ones now with children of their own, taken on the gee gee. It had been the policy of Dudley and his wife to leave the home as much as possible just as it was in the days of Grandpa and Grandma. The pictures and furniture are all much as before. Our old drawing room suite which we had in Cradock and sold to Dudley still does service in the parlour. The great big spare room in which Uncle Joe and Aunt Sophia slept when they visited Grass Ridge is just the same. The wallpaper had not even been changed – it has not needed to be. All the farms in the neighbourhood have been connected by telephone or at least most of the English farms have been. We soon got into communication with Willie Saunders for instance. I got him by saying Cape Town calling Willie Saunders. He and his wife and Clifford and May came down to supper and spent the evening until about ten. He used to drive the motor himself but as he

recently ran into a doctor's car and knocked it over he has given up driving. Clifford has the job now. It was very pleasant recalling old times and history. Mom played some of her old pieces. Dudley and Kitty sang, photographs were looked at and family history discussed. Time went all too soon. I am glad to say that Mr Saunders has had no return of the trouble for which I took him to England some 30 years ago.

Of course we looked all round the homestead. The trees have grown, but the old garden is much the same. The old gate in the flower garden still hangs on the same old hinges. The big tree under the shadow of which the golden wedding photographs were taken is still weathering the storms. The tennis court near the house is not often used. The adopted children are away at boarding school and there are not many young people about who play. We visited the river. There was a good stream running for irrigation purposes lower down stream. It would have been impossible for us to have crossed in the car had we approached Grass Ridge from that side as we had intended doing originally. We noticed a number of fish trying to swim up stream over the weir in the river but were unsuccessful.

We left for Uncle Norman's farm, Katkop, on Tuesday afternoon after visiting the dam again with Uncle Dudley and Aunt. As we approached Katkop gate we passed a car and Mom recognised the driver as Olive Collett with Uncle Walter on their way home from Graaff Reinet. They did not recognise us but we got into touch with them over the phone shortly afterwards. Of course they were not expecting us so were not on the look out. Uncle Norman and Gladys had not returned from Cradock stock fair when we arrived but the governess received us kindly and we awaited the arrival of the car which soon came. Uncle was busy shearing in order to obtain the Government subsidy by 30<sup>th</sup> June. Wool, which in the boom times was realising 5/- per pound, is now only fetching from four pence to five pence. Some difference. Some farmers find it is not worth while sending sheep skins to the market and are giving them to their servants. The same applies to the lower grades of wool. Uncle Norman specialises in sheep and certainly has a very fine lot. I asked him if the trip he took to Australia with Uncle James some years ago was a financial success. He said no. He thought he knew something about sheep in those days but found that he did not, consequently he bought the wrong class of stock. One buys experience and often have to pay very dearly for it. The three youngest children are at home whilst the two elder boys are at Kingswood school in Grahamstown. They often see our Denis. Had we been a week later we should have seen the boys as they are expected home for the short holidays. We were only able to stay one night at Katkop as we felt that we must hurry on if we wanted to complete the round of visits. Our next call was at Uncle Bertie's Spelmanskop, a few miles off the main road on the way to Cradock. We phoned to Uncle Albert's only son and found that his father was at that moment at his farm so we asked him to wait for us, which he did. This was on Wednesday morning and we got there in time for lunch. They did not know that we were anywhere in the district. When Mom and I got near the house we tooted a good deal and Aunt Annie came out to see who was making such a noise. She did not recognise me until she saw Mom. Uncle followed us a little time later as he was driving in a buggy alone. They were very surprised to see us and congratulated us both on looking so well. They only have one daughter at home now. Another is nursing in Grahamstown. The depression is affecting them as everyone else. Added to this there have been other heavy losses through assisting others. I can only remember once visiting this farm before. It is quite isolated amongst the mountains. Owing to heavy rains from time to time the road gets terribly washed out and at times the farm is quite cut off from the outside world until the sluits have run down. The farm is an outstanding landmark owing to the pyramid shaped mountain on the property. It can be seen for miles around. At one time it was thought Uncle is as busy as ever he was. He is over 70 and work goes on just the same. He employs about 150 hands I think and there is never any rush or flurry. I do not think I have ever in the 45 years I have known him seen him excited or flurried. He trusts everyone, and I am sorry to say he is too often taken in. His losses in this way alone would provide a handsome sum if it could be collected. I know it runs into many thousands. Everyone is kept busy and nothing seems to escape his notice. Whilst we were there one of his servants was very ill and the District Surgeon had to come out to investigate matters. It turned out to be cerebral

meningitis. Uncle has great stacks of lucerne all over the place. His servants said he would have to buy more land so that he could stack his hay. Aunt Jessie and Enid are as usual kindness itself. We were allocated to the state room and were very comfortable. Uncle Jack and Aunt Agnes came down and spent the evening as did also the rest of the family. There was plenty to talk about, farming, the depression, politics, etc. We were very interested in reading extracts from Grandpa Collett's diary, written about 100 years ago. The prices of farms, stock and merchandise provided great contrasts with those of the present day. I have offered to have extracts typed and circulated amongst the relations if desired. Uncle told us that he had fenced farms abutting on 41 neighbours and with only one exception had he had any trouble with them. The one farmer he has been trying to get square with for the past seven years. His work of improving the farm seems as though it will never stop. He reckons he has spent about 80 000 pounds on it.

I had some tennis with Uncle Jack's son and daughters. We also spent an evening at their home, which I had never visited before. They have a very nice home. One of the girls is engaged to Mr Hallier who is very interested in bee keeping. Whilst I was getting served at the Fish River shop, Edgar and Cyril Collett turned up. They were in a hurry to get into Cradock so we could only have a few minutes conversation. They used to be at our house in Cradock very often in their school days. Both of them were very keen on sports. The event of our visit was the monthly reaching service at the Church at the station, on Sunday morning. There were between 30 and 40 present almost all of whom were relations. Rev Mr Evans, Wesleyan minister from Cradock gave a very helpful address. After service a number of friends came down to dinner at Uncle Herbert's where we enjoyed more social intercourse. As Uncle Walter and Olive did not come down to service owing to his infirmity – rheumatism – we decided to motor up to see them in the afternoon. I am very glad we did as otherwise we should not have seen anything of them except as they passed us as we were nearing Norman Collett's and Reggy did not see us. Uncle was sitting out under the big trees in front of their nice house. He did not move all the time we were there. He does not suffer pain if he keeps still. We had not been to Groenkloof since Aunt Bremmie died some years ago. Olive has grown very stout. She seems very well and manages everything very nicely. They were not at home when we visited these parts some years ago. Uncle Herbert and Enid went with us. Uncle Walter is 77 this year. Aunt Letty is the next eldest in the family. I had a little difficulty in negotiating the drift at the house as it was very sandy, but with patience managed to get through. Olive does all the driving about and has to get out to open the gates as well as her Father cannot move owing to his rheumatism. They had just returned from a visit to Graaff Reinet to see the married daughter Hilda.

Sunday evening we had music and retired fairly early in view of making a fairly early start on the last lap of the motor part of the holiday.

We made Middelburg and expected to reach there quite easily but we were bound for disappointment. For a main road it was absolutely the worst stretch we had encountered on the journey. Loose sand, ploughed roads, frequent and defective gates made travelling uncomfortable. I think Mom must have opened within the last few days about sixty gates. We passed a road party in the neighbourhood of Conway and I really wonder how we got through but we did. We wanted to call at Cousin Harry Collett's farm which is about 18 miles before we reached Middelburg but as there were no names on the farm gates except in the case of Wesley Collett, who by the way had left the district some years ago but had not removed his name we had to go right into town. When we got to his sister's house we found that her sister Dora who we had intended visiting near Burgersdorp, had that morning gone out to her brother's farm. Had we known where to turn out of the main road we should have seen quite a number of our relations. However we contented ourselves by speaking to them over the phone. We had lunch with cousin Myra, whom I had seen the week or two before when I came in from Rooispruit. She took us along to see another cousin Ben Collett who used to be in the police in Vryburg many years ago. He is Charlie Collett's brother and son of Uncle James of Graaff Reinet. We knew him in Cradock also. He has retired long ago. At present he is prospecting for hidden money on a farm. The owner died some years ago and was paralysed so badly that he could not tell anyone where he had buried his money. Ben says the



divining rod works with him just as well over hidden money as it does with water. He is to have half the proceeds if he finds it. We pushed on as soon as we could as we had phoned to Aunt Rosa at Dwaal saying we hoped to arrive there that evening. We went along merrily although there was a nasty bad wind, until we got to Carlton, just before you reach Naauwpoort. I had calculated that I had enough petrol to carry me through as I did not want to have a large surplus as one is not allowed to have much petrol in the car when it is trucked on the railway. As I mounted the hill just at the steepest place the car stalled. Fortunately I had some petrol in a spare tin and everything was alright after that had been put in. We were delayed a little at Naauwpoort as I thought it would be necessary to bring the car back to that station for trucking and had to order the truck in advance. When we got to Dwaal we found that this was not necessary as we could truck it from there. It was dark when we got to Maskell's and the road was not too good but better than we had from Fish River to Middelburg. As we got near to the farm we met Mr Eidelman who told us that they were waiting for us. To be concluded in my next.

At Cape Town, 7/5/1932

By some miscalculation I found that I was a day out in my reckoning and instead of having to leave Dwaal on Tuesday, we could stay till Wednesday and still be back in Cape Town on Thursday. We took advantage of this in visiting two of the sons' farms both of which are fairly near the old home. They are all comfortably settled and if prices were normal would be doing very well. However there are many, very many, who are much worse off than they are. They have all been trained to work, and work hard and they have something to show for their industry. Dwaal house is fitted with its own electric light, wireless, hot water geyser etc. Fortunately these improvements were made in the good times of years ago. We had many hearty laughs at incidents in the past. Of course you know that we were married on the same day at Grass Ridge. Both families have much cause for thankfulness. Each has had its joys and its sorrows, its ups and downs.

During the visit I called on one of my old Cradock Sunday School boys and was very disappointed to find him in the condition he was. Next day however he was normal and I hope the little talk I had with him may do some good. It was a great convenience not having to take the car back to Naauwpoort for trucking. We telephoned for the truck to be sent to Dwaal and with the assistance of Kenneth Maskell and boys it was duly loaded up and dispatched to Cape Town where it duly arrived on Saturday. We left by train on Wednesday afternoon and in 24 hours were safely in Cape Town. Rev Mr Perry met us at the station and motored us to Observatory.

We have had a very nice holiday and are very thankful that we have escaped accidents and have been able to see so many of the family and friends.

Mom's family is a remarkable one. Fancy all twelve in the family living and we were able to see all of them in their own homes except for two – Aunt Letty and Uncle Gervase being so far away. It is unreasonable to expect that the family chain will remain unbroken for many years longer and whilst it is whole it has been very nice to see so many.

I am conscious of very many mistakes made in this long letter. I have not had time to reread and correct them so must ask you all to excuse them.

I hope I have not unduly wearied you with the account of our travels but it was interesting to us and may perhaps have been interesting to you. In any case I hope so.

Yours very lovingly, Dad

I should be glad to have both copies (original and duplicate) returned to me when read by the various readers.

The following table of dates and distances may be of interest.

<b>Date 1932</b>	<b>Between</b>	<b>Miles by Motor</b>	<b>Miles by motor on train</b>
March 21	Cape Town & Maritzburg		1182
" 24	Maritzburg & Inchanga & about town	34	
" 25	About Inchanga	5	
" 28	Inchanga & Maritzburg	24	
" "	About Maritzburg	8	
" 29	Maritzburg & Howick	15	
" "	Howick & Estcourt	29	
" "	Estcourt & Colenso	45	
" "	Colenso & Ladysmith	19	
" "	About Ladysmith	13	
" 30	Ladysmith & Van Reenans Pass	37	
" "	Van Reenans Pass & Harrismith	21	
" "	Harrismith & Bethlehem	61	
" "	Bethlehem & Senekal	40	
" "	Senekal & Kroonstad	50	
April 2	Kroonstad & Parys and back	132	
" 4	Kroonstad & Ventersburg	34	
" "	Ventersburg & Winburg	36	
" "	Winburg & Brandfort	39	
" "	Brandfort & Bloemfontein	36	
" 5	About Bloemfontein	45	
" 6	Bloemfontein & Trompsburg	83	
" "	Trompsburg & Philippolis	40	
" 7	Philippolis & Colesberg	38	
" "	Colesberg & Wilkies	56	
" 8	Wilkies & Rooispruit	46	
" 9	Rooispruit & Middelburg & back	46	
" 11	Rooispruit & Grass Ridge	37	
" 12	Grass Ridge Dam	5	
" "	Grass Ridge & Katkop	10	
" 13	Katkop & Spelmanskop	13	
" "	Katkop & Cradock	23	
" "	About Cradock	35	
" 15	Cradock & Fish River	26	
" 16	About Fish River	35	
" 18	Fish River & Middelburg	44	
" "	Middelburg & Dwaal	49	
" 19	About Dwaal	35	
" "	Dwaal & Cape Town		551
	TOTAL	1414	1733

We paid 2/-  
per gallon  
for petrol in  
Maritzburg;

2/3 in Van  
Reenen;  
Estcourt,  
Bethlehem,  
Kroonstad &  
Bloemfontei  
n.

2/4 in  
Trompsberg,  
Colesberg,  
Rooispruit,  
Cradock &  
Middelburg.

2/5 at  
Winberg &  
Fish River

Cape Town  
price is 1/9

PS. In writing on our stay in Cradock I forgot to mention that we visited the cemetery and placed some flowers on Uncle James' grave. We also saw Aunt Bremmie's grave and that of my cousin Amelia Watts who died in Cradock many years ago. Her brother Challey is in a nursing home in Manchester, England suffering from rheumatism.

We were also very interested in going through the Park and to notice how well the trees which were planted on the occasion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee have grown. I could not identify the one I planted but all have done well. There is now a small but interesting collection of animals in the park which interests the younger visitors as well as those of older growth.

No doubt I shall think of other items which I have forgotten but they must pass unrecorded for the present.