

Bloemfontein
As from 53a Bree Street
Cradock
January 2nd, 1935

My Dear All,

This is the first time I have written the new date. I have been very lazy about writing since I left Cradock and with the exception of the united letter written on Xmas Day – which by the way Blodwen typed for me – I have not used the machine.

We have been favoured with letters from most of the scattered family and as the majority were with us at Kroonstad for Xmas, it has hardly seemed worthwhile to record our happenings. However, for the benefit of those who were not there, I think I should give some indication of what we did.

Mom and I left Cradock on Saturday night 22nd. The train was reported full so far as 2nd class was concerned and as all arrangements had been made to meet Joe and Blodwen at Bloemfontein the following morning, we felt bound to travel by that train so went first class. Joe and Blodwen were at the station and we were glad that they had decided to risk coming to Kroonstad in spite of the fact that two more of Grace's children had developed chickenpox. They were not ready to come by our train so decided to come by the evening one which arrived during the early hours of the morning. Ted had arranged for a couple of rooms in town for us so they came to us. Reg and Dot had arrived the previous afternoon by car from Potgietersrus and were fixed up at Grace's.

We went to church the same evening and all had meals together at Grace's home. The elasticity of South African homes was again demonstrated. Reg and Dot and their two boys were shaken down in addition to Grace and Ted's family of four into their three roomed house and Joe and Blodwen and their two babies had one of the rooms with us in town. Here, in Bloemfontein, Blodwen has fixed up Mom and I, Reg, Dot and their two babes in their small house.

Xmas Day saw all the adults at service in the Methodist Church at seven in the morning. The children having been allowed to have one or two of their presents beforehand and the dining room in which the tree was arranged was kept locked until we all returned from church. There was great rejoicings when the presents were distributed. Everyone was remembered. In the afternoon we motored up to the top weir which we visited on our last visit here. During the recent floods, it was considerably damaged. It was very delightful to watch all the children sliding down the sand banks in the clean sand.

Rooispruit. January 8th. It has not been possible to do any typing since I began this letter. I feel that it is not worthwhile continuing as all the news is getting so stale. We have, as you know, been to Bloemfontein for a week and are now spending a couple of days.

Cradock, January 13th, Sunday afternoon. I am sorry to break the continuity of my weekly epistles but it is useless to try to catch up with what has happened during the holidays. I have, from time to time, sent postcards telling of our whereabouts and I think that must suffice for this year.

We have had a very happy and interesting holiday as most of you were there. It was very delightful to see how all the children played so nicely together and shared each other's toys. I hope that the experiment may be continued another year if we are spared to each other. We are glad to hear that Douglas and family had a good time at Scholtzfontein and Ruth and Denis at Gordons Bay. No doubt each of you have exchanged letters telling of the various incidents of the holiday so that will suffice.

We spent three days at Rooispruit and one at Collett siding. We met Eric and the twins early on Thursday morning on their return from Gordons Bay and was glad to hear that Aunt Emmie had had all her family with her. We reached home on Friday morning and found everything in order. Many thanks for all good wishes for my 71st birthday. It seems only the other day that I passed the 70th milestone. How much we all have to be thankful for. I am hoping that as time goes on, to get along with many jobs that are waiting my attention. We have

been pretty busy since our return. Quite a number of relations have been to see us and we have been pleased to see them.

I expect Ruth and Denis are leaving Cape Town today as Ruth has to resume her duties at the Library on 16th (Harold's anniversary had he been alive).

Am very glad they have had such a nice change and hope that the matter of her stories for the new SA Readers will be satisfactory. Whilst we have been away, I notice that Ruth's Aunt, Mrs JSB Holden of Somerset East, has passed away.

We have received a postcard from Trixie saying she will spend a few days with us, arriving on Wednesday night. We shall be pleased to have her. She is leaving her job at Alice, having secured a position in Vryburg. We do not know with whom.

Mr Thomas is far from well at Aunt Eliza's. He is in the doctor's hands and I hope he will soon be better. He looks pretty bad.

Mary and Jeffrey had dinner with us today. The latter, Ernest's youngest, is a nice lad. Apparently he is not going away for the holidays.

Aunt Eliza very kindly made me a cake for my birthday and I have presented myself with an electric toaster with my own very dear love. We now make our toast as required on the breakfast table.

Blodwen writes that her Father has had a slight stroke again and is in a very low state. He has been much better for some months and has puzzled the doctors. I do not think it would be wise for her to go to Cape Town as the doctors say nothing can be done for him.

One of Josie's children, David, is coming to the Boys school from this quarter. How we wish Douglas' children could be here also. It would be so much more interesting for us if not for them.

We had a sharp thunderstorm this Sunday afternoon but a lot more rain is badly needed.

I played my first game of chess for some years past when at Rooispruit with Uncle Owen. He beat me needless to say.

Yesterday the postman brought us over twenty envelopes which had been accumulating during the past few days. We have had over one hundred cards and many letters. One was from Mr Milne and another from Mr Noble who used to work for us about 40 years ago.

Another event I must record is that yesterday we had the telephone laid on. It will be great convenience and save a good many journeys into town. Our number, should you require to use it, is 75.

Next Sunday we are going to Fish River for service. I expect we shall go out on Saturday so as to have a rest before service. We may spend a few days visiting amongst the relations before returning.

I am glad to say we are both keeping well and hope to hear good news from you all on Wednesday as usual.

Yours with love to all as though named,

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
January 16th, 1935

My Dear All,

As I posted to you so recently as Sunday night, there cannot be much to add as it is only Wednesday morning but I want to make Wednesday my posting day in future. We may in this way keep in close touch with each other as you should be able to reply or comment, as occasion requires, if you write on Sundays as I understand most of you do. So that's that.

Today, Harold would have attained his 42nd birthday, had he still been with us in the flesh. Today, also, I think Ruth starts her duties again after her holiday at Gordons Bay. We are so glad to know that she has not suffered any ill effects from her motor accident. I wonder if the car was insured against accidents.

I have received a very nice silk shirt and a pair of knitted socks from Blodwen for my birthday. It is the first time I have ever possessed a silk garment of that nature. It has given me the opportunity of reprimanding her (and anyone else) for being so extravagant in spending money on me. Nevertheless, I am much obliged and very grateful for the kindly thought. Aunt Eliza made me a layer cake which was also very nice of her.

We are expecting Trixie by this evening's train. We have secured the room next to our lounge for her and are hoping that we may be able to hire the same permanently. Then we shall always have a spare room which we can place at the disposal of our friends. I wonder which member of the family will be the first to occupy same.

Mr Thomas is still far from well and must not go to work at present. I have offered to mind Butler Bros shop whilst Ernest goes to Graaff Reinet at the weekend. So instead of visiting about at Fish River after the service on Sunday, we will return either the same afternoon or early on Monday morning. Ernest's daughter, Joan, is going to teach on a farm school belonging to the Biggs.

Dot writes that Reg has decided to sever his connection with the auctioneering business. He mentioned the matter to me when at Bloemfontein and I am somewhat concerned over the matter. It appears that certain promises that were made to him when he put his money into the concern have not been realised. He has an offer to join another business in the same town and I hope it will turn out all for the best.

I have not had any more games of bowls. Cousin Harry Collett offered his set of woods when we were there recently and I have offered to purchase same from him. I am expecting to hear from him shortly.

Last evening, I went to the local Toc H meeting. It was not very well attended. They conduct the business in a very free and easy style, so different to what I have been accustomed to in other societies in which I am interested.

The weather has been very oppressive during the last few days. A good steady soaking rain would be most acceptable. We have green mealies coming on in our garden. In the meantime, we are being supplied with what we require from the Poplars. Our beans are very fine. The grapefruit has developed a good deal whilst we were away. Cauliflowers are also coming on nicely.

I wonder when the Kimberley schools reopen. I wish it were possible for Douglas' three children to be here. The schools are considered to be very good.

This morning's post has been delivered but I am sorry to say there is nothing from any of you.

Much love to all from
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
January 23rd, 1935

My Dear All,

The first news of interest to you all will be the visit of Trixie on Wednesday last. Her train was a little late but Mom and I met her car at the station. We had hired a room adjoining our lounge for her so she was as close to us as we could arrange. We are trying to arrange to have this room added to our flat as it is very awkward not having a spare room in which to entertain our numerous friends and relations. If there should be a change of tenant next door, no doubt this can be arranged. The present people are willing to let us have it when we want it but we would prefer to furnish it ourselves and make a doorway into our passage instead of having to go out into the street next door. We took Trixie about as much as we could and I think she enjoyed herself for the couple of days she was with us. One morning before breakfast we went up the drive overlooking the town, all along the back of the hospital as far as the slippery rocks. We also drove her through the main streets and visited Mary at her dispensary. Had a swim in the warm baths when Mary was with us. Of course we introduced her to as many of our circle as possible. Aunt Jessie was in and was pleased to meet her again. She was with us at Alice on our recent Grahamstown tour. Incidentally, Aunt Jessie asked if she could drive a motor. I think she would like to have Trixie, if available, when Enid goes nursing. She has been accepted on trial as from June next. She is going to the Buxton Home at Cape Town. Trixie left by the evening train on Friday for her work. We should have liked her to stay longer and gone with us to Fish River, but as she is leaving the Nursing Home at Alice as soon as they will liberate her, she felt that it was her duty to be back on time on Monday. She is going to be with Mrs Rogers in Vryburg as soon as she can get away. We should like her to break her journey on the way back if she can be spared.

Our next item of news is our visit to Fish River on Saturday. We had intended spending a week or so visiting round but as Mr Thomas has been laid up and unable to be at the Book shop for a week or so, and Ernest wanted to take his daughter Joan to start her school at Florrie's farm in the Graaff Reinet district, I arranged to be back on Monday morning so as to be at the shop whilst Ernest was away. Saturday and Sunday were very hot days, two of the hottest we have experienced this season, I think. From our flat to Uncle Herbert's, we did the journey in exactly 60 minutes. The road is badly corrugated in parts. We crossed the railway line four times but there was only one gate to open. We got there in time for dinner. In the afternoon, we went up to Uncle Jack's whilst the young folk played tennis at the station. The locust birds were busy in the lands eating the reapers. Prickly pears are now ripe so we had a few. One almost admires the avenue of gum and Cyprus trees leading to their farm. Mr Byrns planted these when he hired the farm from Uncle Herbert some years ago. There was a good attendance at the service at ten am, Aunt Jessie played the hymns but the organ was not in proper order as a screw had got loose somewhere, with rather discordant result. The heat was very trying and the light very awkward for reading. Willie Saunders was there and some of his family and grandchildren came to dinner at Uncle Herbert's after service. He and I had a long chat whilst resting afterwards. His son, Willie at Naboomspruit, is married at last. One son, Ernest, and his wife are living across the river at Grass Ridge. Harvey Brown and Winnie also came to Herbert's in the afternoon. I must not forget to say that on arrival at Uncle Herbert's, we were served with beautiful ice creams made on the premises in their new Electrolux cooler. We left Fish River at 6.30 but it was still very hot and we were too tired to go to evening service. So we listened in to the Salvation Army service from Johannesburg. It was a pity we left as early as we did as the sun was still so high. We brought with us a few pounds of butter for a market agent from Winnie Brown and although it was wrapped in wet canvas, it was as oil by the time we reached here.

Thursday, 24th. I should have finished this letter last evening but when we got back from visiting George and Hilda Collett at Tarka, we found that Ernest's son, Guy, had not returned from Katkop by pushbike as he was expected to do about 2pm. Ernest being still away, we were

anxious as to what might have happened to him. This necessitated phoning to a number of farmers along the route to ascertain if anyone had seen anything of him. After a lot of trouble and phoning to the police, hospital etc and asking Uncle Jack Collett to get into touch with Katkop, we found that his bike had broken down and he had walked back some miles to Katkop and would come in by this morning's train.

Ernest and family left for Graaff Reinet on Saturday evening and arrived at Vrede some time during the night. Joan is starting a farm school there on one of Bigg's farms for the children of the neighbourhood. I had offered to look after the shop during his absence. So my hours were from 8 to six. They phoned from the farm on Tuesday saying they had been invited to stay longer and as there was a possibility of selling another wireless set to a neighbour, I suggested they stay as Wednesday is only half a day here. They were expected during the evening. It so happened that after all the phoning about Guy, I was taking Mary home (she and Nurse Loscomb had been with us to Tarka for the afternoon) that we found that Ernest and Co had just returned. We were able, therefore, to report that Guy was alright. Mary says this is the first time that Guy has been allowed to go away on his own. As a matter of fact, he was not alone, a young boy friend named Allan went with him. They cycled as far as Uncle Owen's and camped out in the veldt. It is on the return trip that the accident happened. His mate thought he was just behind him and did not trouble to ascertain why he was not following until he got into town. Of course it was very foolish of him. However, all's well that ends well.

We had a very nice afternoon at Tarka. The road is in a terrible corrugated condition and gave us a nasty shaking up, or rather down. We do not want to go on that road again if we can help it until it has been repaired. It was interesting reviving memories of old times in Vryburg. Hilda has never been back since she was married.

Thanks for all letters received during the week. Douglas writes he is busy as ever. Col Rodger's sale was on Tuesday. There is talk of Evelyn going to live for a while in Kimberley for the children's sake whilst at school and whilst Douglas builds a new house on his own farm. We should be very glad if the children came to boarding school here. We should then have very real interests in staying here. They must do what they think best. Grace says there is a prospective tenant for their plot. For many things, it would be an advantage for them to get back into the town now that Pam has to go to school as well as the two boys. We have had a card from Ruth reporting safe arrival back in Grahamstown. A long letter is on its way telling of their doings. Blodwen writes that Joe seems very run down and wanting him to come to us for a month whilst she goes to Cape Town. Naturally we should be very glad for him to come if a way opens. Dot writes that her boys evidently took chickenpox from Kroonstad but have not had it badly. The business change takes effect from the end of this month. They have no doubt but it will be alright. Ernest's Dorothy has passed her matric second class. This has caused considerable satisfaction.

During this time I have been at the shop, I have been able to write quite a number of letters in reply to Xmas greetings. I still have a number more I want to get off. We have had some green mealies from our own garden already, also figs.

Much love to all,
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
January 30th, 1935

My Dear All,

The way time is flying is dreadful. Here we have reached the end of the first month of the year and have hardly recovered from the excitement of Xmas. It behoves us all to make the most of the opportunities we have.

Nothing very exciting has happened during the week. David Biggs arrived on Friday night to attend the Boys' school. He is staying at the Poplars. I attended the opening of the Boys' school on Monday morning. It reminded me of the many times I had attended similar occasions at Vryburg when I was Secretary to the School Board. The Chairman stated that out of 18 pupils who had sat for the Matric exam, eight had passed first class and eight second. Only two had failed. In the Junior Certificate, 38 entered and 34 passed. The school evidently has done good work. Teachers and scholars were heartily congratulated.

The Girls' school opened at the same time so I was not able to attend both functions but I understand they did fairly well in the exams but not so good as the Boy's school. I mention these facts in the hope that should any of you be looking for a good school to send your children, you might consider the desirability of sending them here. It would certainly give us something to look forward to and take an interest in their welfare. Talking of schools, early yesterday morning we had a visit from Mrs Every who had brought two of her girls to Rocklands as boarders. She was Jessie Wilmot and worked for me at Butler Brothers for many years before she was married. Her husband is a relative of Mom's. She had seen in the papers about our coming to settle in Cradock and said she could not go back to her home in the Richmond district without coming to see us. She has not altered at all – except grown stouter. Mom showed her all over our flat and she was very interested. I took her to see Mary at her dispensary as she expects both her daughters will take up nursing. We also dropped in at Aunt Eliza for a standing gossip for a few minutes. All were very pleased to renew the acquaintance. She mentioned that Eric Fear had written to her husband about taking over his business at Rooispruit.

The heat during the past week has been unbearable. How I have wished for the sea breezes at such times. The maximum thermometer, which I brought up with me, registered in the shade of our back stoep 103 on Friday, 102 on Saturday and 101 on Sunday. Monday beat the record by rising to 106. This was followed by a thunderstorm but very little rain fell. The air, however, has been cooler.

Rev Barnes returned from his holiday on Friday. He and his wife had an enjoyable motor tour to East London etc. The Hogsback must be a very beautiful spot by all accounts. We shall want to go there one of these days. Trixie writes that she will be leaving for Vryburg about the middle of February. We should like her to break the journey here again if she can spare the time. We will see her as she passes through. Uncle Owen and Aunt Kate, with their two daughters, phoned on Friday saying they were passing through on their way to Grahamstown etc. We got the next door room for them and the girls slept in our lounge on the collapsible bed. We are hoping to get the next room permanently and furnish it as a spare room. They left early on Saturday morning. Unfortunately, Ruth and Denis were out when they went to see them. Ruth and Denis write about their holiday which they much enjoyed. We are pleased to hear that the late Mrs Holden has left a substantial sum for Denis' education.

Mr Thomas is slowly gaining strength. He looks very white and is still away from work. He seems to be putting on weight which is a good sign in his case. He does not like motoring otherwise I would take him out occasionally.

We have been returning calls the last few days and I think that duty is now up to date. Mr and Mrs Metcalf had called to see us twice and found us out on both occasions so we went there on Monday afternoon. He was very interested in the reading glass which Uncle Joe gave me. It is an oblong shape with the handle at the side. He has asked me to get one like it for him. His eyes are worse than mine. He has had a number of operations and the specialist in P.E.

seems to say that nothing more can be done for him. He told me the time in the nursing home was about the worst part of the operation. He still carries on his office duties daily. We also called on Rev Jordan, who motored Uncle Joe to Fort Hare. He was out, attending a funeral of a Mr Stegman, a relation of the Dodds. We also called on the Postmaster's wife, Mrs Hallas who is sister to Mrs Edmonds who we met in Cape Town and attended Friends meetings. They called on us just before Xmas on their way to England. I think they are related to Gilbert Reynolds of Durban.

Last evening, I attended a meeting of the joint council of the European and non-European community. Mary is secretary. It is quite a useful organisation and is similar to the one the late Howard Pim started in Johannesburg.

Cousin Harry Collett has given me his set of bowls and I am hoping to make use of them at least once a week, if not oftener. At present I am getting little or no exercise.

On Sunday I had an emergency call to take the service in the Methodist English church owing to the illness of the appointed speaker. They rang me up about six on Saturday evening.

I have had to change my car number to CAT 1012 which is the highest number of licences issued so far as Cradock is concerned. I am quite loath to change from CA 17194 which has been my number ever since I had the car. I get a slight reduction in my insurance premium owing to being registered in the country instead of Cape Town. Presumably the risk of accident is less here. The roads here are not a patch on what we have been used to at the Cape.

We have an epidemic of mice in our bathroom the last few days and have been busy catching them. So far they do not appear to have discovered where the pantry is.

We are somewhat anxious about Joe. Blodwen wrote a few days ago saying his nerves were run down and wanting him to come to us for a fortnight or preferably for a month. Needless to say we shall be glad to have him but later news is to the effect that he does not think it necessary. His job must have been very trying in the heat of the past few weeks. We hope for continued better reports. Douglas has been very busy with Rogers sale of furniture, machinery etc. We hope for all concerned that good prices were realised. He has to face building his own house on his own farm in the near future. Perhaps Evelyn may go and live in Kimberley for a time so as to be with the children whilst at school. Reg starts in his new position on the first of Feb. I hope it will be to his liking and a suitable change from what he has had during the past few months. He will not have to travel about so much as he has been doing ever since he has been in Potgietersrus. We have not heard if anything has come of the possibility of letting or selling Grace and Ted's plot at Kroonstad. Perhaps we may hear by today's post. Most of the above has been written before breakfast and we do not get our letters before about eleven. Miss van der Walt writes that she is engaged and expects to get married about the end of the year. The YMCA will miss her a great deal. I see they have just increased her salary to £9.10 pm. Next Monday is Mom's birthday. I do not know how we shall celebrate it as the quarterly meeting is being held that evening.

Later. Letters have come to hand from Grace, Dot and Blodwen, also Mrs Ross Roberts and Edith Collett. All very interesting. One came yesterday from England giving the news of the birth of a daughter to Bernard Holmes.

I must not attempt another sheet. You would not have time to read it.

Much love to each and all,

Dad

54a Bree Street
Cradock
February 6th, 1935

My Dear All,

The last few weeks I have been getting up early on Wednesday mornings (6 am) so as to do my typing whilst I am fresh. I generally get up well before seven. I find I get tired towards evening and we sit outside in front of our flat in the cool. Sometimes we go for a stroll round the block. I find the light is not too good either and I am constantly tapping the wrong keys. I am doing this in the dining room whilst the boy is sweeping out the lounge. The lounge is nice and bright in the morning sun. Mom generally rises about 7.30 and we have breakfast on the back stoep about eight. Now that the back is enclosed with mosquito gauze, it is very nice. It is very private as the hedge and trees shut us in from observation.

Well a twelfth of this yea has already gone. Mom and I have both passed another milestone and are still going strong. We are very thankful for all the blessings and mercies which we are favoured to enjoy. I am glad none of you forgot to write to Mom. The post that got to her on 5th was a heavy one. Letters I think came from each and some parcels as well. Mom must write and thank each personally. I was determined that her birthday should not pass without due recognition. So I asked a number of friends to come along to afternoon tea. Aunt Eliza said she had had two bad nights so could not come. Mary was on duty at her dispensary and of course could not be with us but came early in the morning to offer her congratulations. Rev and Mrs Barnes came, also Mrs Lidbetter, Mrs Cary, Mr and Mrs Dersley, Mrs Kissock, Alison, Miss Mennell, and Christine. Mrs Heathcote came over later as she had been X-rayed in the afternoon. Of course we had a birthday cake, tea etc. Just as we were sitting down to our evening meal, Uncle Herbert, Aunt Jessie and Enid rolled up. It was the quarterly meeting of the Methodist church and Uncle wanted to attend. This was my first meeting and I have been roped in as secretary to the meeting as Mr Radford resigned. I hope I shall be able to manage it. It rained very heavily during the meeting and we wanted Uncle and all of them to stay the night. Uncle was determined to get back that night so off they started. It was plucky of Enid to drive and we were rather doubtful if they would get through the Pauls river. I phoned first thing in the morning to find out how they got on and Enid said they got through the river alright but were held up at a sluice further on. Eric Fear was held up at the same place some time ago. They had to spend the night at a farm nearby and did not get home till six the next morning. Uncle Norman had dinner with us yesterday as it was stock fair day.

Mrs Cursons, wife of the Editor of the Midland News was knocked down whilst out for a walk by herself by a native boy riding a push bicycle. Her collar bone was broken. We went to see her on Sunday afternoon. She is getting on as well as can be expected. Moral for some of my relations who are always pointing out the dangers of motoring - don't go for walks - ride in a motor. I had my fourth game of bowls on Saturday afternoon. I find that my hand is so small that I cannot hold the woods firmly. I shall have to take hand stretching exercises. I wish there was a croquet court here.

I was talking to a young man who works in the post office yesterday and he says he would like to change with Ted at Kroonstad. I have written to Ted about it. It would be nice for us if it could be arranged. Dot writes that Reg has started his new job. They will not have a car at present. His hours are pretty long but he will not have to go about in the district as he did before. Douglas says Col Roger's sale went off very well. He got some of the furniture etc. I must not tackle another sheet this week as I have several other letters to write. Glad you are all keeping well. Good health is the greatest wealth.

Much love to all,
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
February 13th, 1935

My Dear All,

It is 6.20 am, I suppose you have all noticed how the days are drawing in. Or perhaps you do not get up as early as I do. I enjoy the sunshine in the lounge first thing in the morning. In fact, we have it bright in this room all the morning. I expect we shall notice a great difference in a week or two's time as the School Board has started to demolish the old school house right opposite us. In the afternoon, this wall of the building has acted as a reflector for our front room. When it is down, we shall have a wider view and shall be able to see the back of the new (built when we lived in Cradock before) boys' school where Harold and Douglas used to go. It is now used by the Wilson (Poor School). They are not going to put up another building so when the ground is cleared, it is to be used as a basket ball playground for the girls. I do not think it will be any annoyance to us.

We have had some variety of weather the last few days. On Saturday evening it turned quite cold and Trixie wrote saying there was snow on the Katberg. Sunday was cool and my minimum thermometer registered just 14 degrees above freezing during the night. This, compared with 106 in the shade of a fortnight ago, is some difference. February is often our hottest month but I think this one will reduce the average very considerably. Trixie writes that she will not break her journey here on her way back to Vryburg. She passes here early tomorrow morning. I shall go over and see her. Tomorrow is Uncle Herbert's birthday. Perhaps we may take a run out to wish him many happy returns and go and see Uncle Walter at the same time. If we do, we may take Miss Mennell with us. We would call for morning tea at Uncle Norman's on the way out. Mom does not like the corrugations (I have not found anyone who does) but they are there and cannot be avoided unless we never go anywhere by car. Mom has not been too well during the early part of last week. I do not know if it is the fruit or water or what that upsets her. She is alright again now I am glad to say. She thinks it is liver trouble but Mary says it is tummy.

Aunt Eliza gave an evening on Saturday last as it was Mr Thomas' birthday. We were invited and Mary and Miss Mennell and Agnes Williams were there. We had a very jolly evening, playing table games, halma etc. I forgot to mention that Mrs Kissick was amongst the guests. Mr Thomas is so much better that he was able to go to Eric and Freda yesterday by train. He looks to spend a fortnight there. He suggested my motoring him out but we all thought that the train would be better for him.

I had a postcard from Capt Upton on Saturday saying he was out here again in connection with some of his investments. He is not staying long as he has booked for a trip round the world in July. He does travel a lot. I hope he will come and see us as he is going to Johannesburg.

Lynne wrote a few days ago saying that perhaps the three of them might come to us for the Easter school holidays. I find that these holidays do not come actually at Easter but commence about the end of March and end about April 6th. Easter is late this year – April 19th. It will be very nice if they do come as Aunt Eliza is expecting Gladys and her two boys. Thursday and Friday, May 30th and 31st, are both public holidays, Ascension Day and Union Day respectively, so I have suggested that perhaps Joe and Blodwen might come to us for a long weekend. May 31st is the annual day for the Fish River fete and I expect we shall be there for the day and would afford a nice opportunity for Joe and Blodwen to see the relations there. Enid will be leaving for Cape Town either on the Thursday or Friday morning. Perhaps Easter might be more convenient to them. In any case, they are welcome at any time, it makes no difference to us. We have decided if we will attend the Vryburg Show on May 24th, I should like to.

Love from
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
February 20th, 1934

My Dear All

It is really Tuesday afternoon 19th and I am trying to write this sitting up in bed with the typewriter on a low table across my knees. I cannot see the keys on the typewriter as the distance is just out of focus for my eyes either with or without my glasses on. So please excuse the extra number of mistakes I am sure to make as I am dependent on my memory as to the position of the various keys. Let me explain why I am in bed. Last week I had a number of disappointments which I should not have allowed to disturb my usual peace of mind. I was also planned to conduct morning service in the Methodist English church. I keenly felt my worthiness to fulfil such a task. My voice became husky on Saturday but was a bit better on Sunday morning. It was a very hot morning and foolishly I put on my usual blue serge suit. I perspired freely and changed my clothes directly I got back. Mrs Barnes (our minister's wife) had dinner with us as her husband was conducting service at Fish River. Mary and David came along to supper and as I felt washed out, I stayed in whilst they went to evening service. I listened in to the service broadcast from the Methodist Church, Cape Town and enjoyed Rev Allen Pees discourse on Paul's thorn in the flesh. Mary advised my staying in bed for a day or two and seeing the doctor. This I did and the Doctor came this morning and gave me a good overhauling. He does not think the altitude of Cradock is too much for my heart but of course the coast would be less of a strain. I must not worry (I am thankful I have nothing very much to worry about). I must not lose my temper etc. I must be content to go slowly when I walk and stop still if I feel a pain in my chest. He does not see any occasion for me to give up the car. He has given me some medicine and suggests resting quietly for a few days more in bed. So here I am. I am to eat sparingly, fruit in the mornings, nothing to drink with meals, very little meat etc. The temperature on our back veranda yesterday was 102 in the shade so you can imagine a blanket is hardly necessary. Mom has just been reading what I have typed and has had a good laugh. Some of the words she is sure none of you will be able to make out what I intended to write but as most of you are more or less acquainted with typing, you will see that the adjoining letter has been struck. Please make all allowance for me. My toy tells me that the thermometer registered today 108. If this is correct, it is a record.

Dot writes that she has not received my last week's dear all. I wonder if it has not gone astray. I post on Wednesdays so that you can get them before the end of the week. Joe is swotting with the idea of passing his Afrikaans exam in April. The foreman over him is being transferred to Durban so there is promotion in the air. We hope Joe is successful. It will be very difficult as he is working overtime every night. Blodwen's sister is expected for Easter so we are hoping that will come to us for a long weekend at the end of May. The 30th and 31st are both public holidays.

Wednesday morning. I am still in bed, had a bad night. My throat is still rather raw but the doctor's medicine will, I hope, soon put that right. I have enjoyed some green figs from our garden. Our grapes are also very nice and green mealies are finished. We still have cauliflowers, beans and tomatoes in the garden. Alison brought me some nice roses from her garden yesterday.

We have not definitely heard that Douglas' children are coming to us but we hope they do. Douglas is having a very strenuous time at present. The sale of the Ranch stock takes place on March 29th just as the school holidays commence. Then he has the management of Col and Mrs Rogers' affairs on his hands as well as making arrangements for his own future farming should the Ranch be sold or closed down. All of us have our different problems to solve. I wonder how Joe will come out with the sale of the remainder of his cattle that has been running on Douglas' veldt for some years. I hope he gets good prices. Am sorry he has to work so hard in this weather. Letter from Dot this morning reports the receipt of the missing letter. So that's

alright. Grace writes this morning that they had rain on Sunday. We are needing some badly. The temperature yesterday was 98 not 108. The boy was mistaken.

Possibly I shall stay in bed this weekend so as to please others. The least exertion makes me perspire profusely which is, perhaps, a sign of weakness. I don't know how I would get on without the typewriter. I find I cannot judge the distances from the keyboard, hence so many typing mistakes. However it gives me something to do. My ordinary correspondence is again getting in arrear. I will try to catch up as soon as I can get up.

Am glad to say Mom is quite well again.

Aunt Emmie celebrated her 69th birthday on 23rd. Evelyn also has a birthday soon. I must try to write to her. Mr Dersley came along this morning and reported Aunt Eliza as being well. I sent her a note yesterday saying I was in dry dock. She finds this heat very trying so does not come out more than she can help. I think her visit last week was the first time she has been to see us this year. So far she has never had a meal with us, not that we have not asked her to. Mr Thomas is still away at Rooispruit. He said he was not going to stay more than a fortnight.

We get very good reception from overseas on the wireless. It is nice to hear Big Ben striking every now and then. We heard London announce the sudden death of Professor du Plessis on Saturday. I knew him very well and was talking to him here the Saturday before when he was entertained at a reception in his honour. I had a good deal to do with him over the visit of Sir John R Mott last year at the YMCA.

I am tired now so will close with very dear love to each and all as though named.

Yours affectionately

Dad

Am glad Grace can say that Harold does not seem to limp at all after his broken leg.

53a Bree Street
Cradock
February 27th, 1934

My Dear All,

It is Saturday afternoon and it is very dark as a heavy thunderstorm is brewing. I am typing by faith not sight as I cannot distinguish a single letter on any of the keys. I am still in bed, although the doctor was here yesterday afternoon and said I could get up. My cough is better but I am still feeling very tired and have no great desire to get dressed. So think I may as well try to employ myself in writing to you (it is just 3 pm and it is pouring down in torrents and I hope it will last).

Let me introduce you to this room. It is our bedroom. It is at the back of the flat. There is only one window and that looks out to the west. The room is about 13 feet square. The door is just at the corner of the north and west walls. The head of the bed is against the south wall. Now you know the size and shape and layout of the room, I will try to tell you how the interior is arranged. There is a picture rail all round the room level with the top of the door. This we have had to erect. As you enter from the passage, against the north wall is a postcard size of Dot. We have not one of Reg or his would be near it. Then there is the electric light switch. This is controlled from a bedside switch which is very convenient. I have also a reading lamp bracket attached to the bedpost at my side of the bed. So we need not have the middle light on at all.

Coming back to the north wall and next to the switch, is Harold's photo in the square black frame it has occupied for years. Then a frame of Denis taken some years ago in three positions on one mount. Above this is a carved frame (made by Cousin Kate Crew's father) of Mom and I and Harold taken in Barnstaple on his first birthday. Next, of course, is a photo of Ruth. Then in the middle of the wall stands the Burma teak wardrobe which is occupied by dresses etc. Next is a frame of the children as you were just before we left Cradock 27 years ago. Oh what changes have taken place in that time. Then across the corner stands the Burma teak dressing table which is Mother's domain. This is partly screened from the door by the wardrobe.

On the west wall, between the dressing table and the window, is a small framed picture of Holman Hunt's (The Light of the World). Against the west wall, standing on the skirting board and reaching nearly to the picture rail, is a framed mirror about 18 inches wide. The window is in the centre of the west wall and has four large panes of glass, short curtain, green roller spring blind and green curtains which are automatically opened or closed by pulling one piece of cord. The window is quite low, in fact when Uncle James and Aunt Kitty had this as their bedroom, they used to get in and out of the window to their bed on the back stoep. Under the window is the old fireless cooker I bought from Aunt Emmie and never used at Cape Town. I think it originally was Aunt Letty's. I took all the inside out and we use the cooking pots on the electric stove and the containers we have converted into bread tins. The box is now doing service under the window as a linen press and contains our eiderdown etc for the winter. The washstand occupies the other portion of the west wall. Uncle Joe used this bedroom suite in the outside room at Louis Botha House. (In the semi darkness, I find I have not filled the previous page. It is difficult to insert the paper again when once it has been removed from the machine.)

Five pm, it is still raining steadily. I should estimate that about half an inch has fallen so far. We can do with a great deal more. Our rainwater tank is running over.

Above the washstand are photos of Joe and Blodwen, one each side of one of myself taken when I was at Stafford, Allen and Sons about 188?. Blodwen has taken quite a fancy to this photo when I was quite a young man. That is why I have put it where it is. Perhaps she would like to have the photo some day. Fixed to the window frame and supported from the picture rail (so as to avoid driving nails into the wall) is the shaving cabinet (metal) with mirror door which Reg and Dot gave us some time ago. We use it as a medicine cupboard at present. I fixed the cupboard to the window frame by a strip of metal all round three sides close to the wall and screwed the top and bottom to the frame of the window. On the south side our bed takes up

most of the side. I have a stand that Joe made for a Decca gramophone to stand on and which we have not got. This has two shelves below which are useful for books, slippers etc. The wicker dirty clothes basket stands in the corner.

On the south wall hang the following photographs, all framed. Evelyn, the Kingsleys' "welcoming the Springtime", which formed the decorative cover of the SA Lady's Pictorial some years ago, then one of Douglas in his Flying uniform. The next is an enlargement of Grace and Ted's four children, taken when Jean was a baby in the servant's arms. The centre one is an enlargement of my Mother which I think Uncle Willie gave me many years ago. Next is a group of Douglas and Evelyn's children taken under some trees. Then one small frame containing four snaps of Douglas and Evelyn's children. There is Lynne in fancy dress (crinoline), Rex pointing his finger to some object of interest in a tree or sky. One of Arthur, Lynne and Rex and the other taken in front of Cradock House, Vryburg where Douglas & Evelyn are sitting outside and the three eldest children playing with the old rocking horse etc.

The east wall is the least decorated. The door takes up a good portion and my "gentleman's" wardrobe rather more. There is just room for a chair for a visitor. On the wall is an old painting by Mary on a metal plaque of three lovebirds, entitled "two's company, three's none". On the other side of my wardrobe are framed photos of Grace and Ted and four children with Ted's parents. There is also one of their three children alone. The last is of Evelyn sitting on the old rustic seat at Scholtzfontein with her then three children. Last, but not least, is the crayon drawing of a cherub done by cousin Kate Crew which hangs over the door, over the picture rail. I see I have omitted two standing frames on Mom's dressing table. One has a photo of Harold and Ruth taken on their wedding day and a photo of Denis on the back. The other is a photo of Mom and Dot taken in LBH garden and one of Aunts Eliza and Emmie with me taken at Cape Town. A box ottoman, which Joe made before he left Cape Town, stands at the foot of our bed. A couple of floor rugs complete the furniture of this room where I have been lying for the best part of the last week. It is a nice bright room and the outlook into the garden is pretty. One cannot see far owing to the foliage.

I do not know if you will be interested in all these particulars but it has afforded me some pleasure in the giving of them. I have not typed it all at one sitting. It has taken quite a long time to do.

You will notice that there are no photos of Joe and Blodwen or Reg and Dot's children included in the above. We are sorry for this omission and same will be rectified as soon as we get some framed. We do not appear to have a photo of Reg by himself. This we have asked for.

It is now Tuesday evening 25th. Since I last touched the typewriter, I have been up and down. Sunday evening I was up whilst Mom went to service. I stayed at home and listened in to a service from the Presbyterian Church, Cape Town. The reception was not very good but I was impressed by the fervency of the prayer for conciliation and good will amongst nations. I then switched over to Johannesburg where a service was being broadcast from a Dutch Reformed Church in English. The same fervent prayer for unity and co-operation amongst the nations and peoples was very beautifully expressed. Aunt Eliza came in at this juncture. She tried to catch the message of the preacher but could only hear a noise – not the words – so I switched off and turned into bed again. Aunt read me a number of letters she had received and Mom went back part of the way with her. As Mr Thomas is still away, we asked her to Sunday's dinner or any meal but she prefers her own arrangements. She has kindly made us two tiny loaves of her own bread. Needless to say they are very nice. Sunday afternoon, Mr Cursons came to see me. His wife, who was knocked down by a native cyclist, is getting on nicely. Have offered to take them for a spin when her arm that was broken is sufficiently strong. During my week's confinement to bed, I have played a few games of Halma, one with Mom, another with Mary and sometimes with myself. Mr and Mrs Lidbetter called one evening. They seem to have had a very enjoyable holiday in Cape Town at Xmas time. Tuesday I was up all day. I am still taking medicine but I think I can consider that no further bulletins need be issued. It has been a very restful week.

Time has not hung on my hands unduly. I have rested as much as I could and hope there will not be any further need to be unduly careful or anxious.

Joe and Blodwen have invested in a new wireless set. I hope it will give them a great deal of pleasure. It is strange that we get much better reception from overseas than we do from the Union. I do not know why but it is so. Joe and Blodwen are looking to coming to us at Easter or Union Day weekends. Douglas and Evelyn are letting their three come to us for the School short holidays March 29th to April 8th. Gladys and her two boys are also coming to Aunt Eliza for the same time. They will probably stay longer.

Jim Collett, brother of Uncle Jack and Edith Collett called last Friday. He is farming in the Eastern Transvaal near the Swaziland border. Edith is living with him. It was he who was driving Uncle John Trollip of Dagga Boer to Cradock and was washed down a spruit near Cradock and Mr Trollip was drowned. That happened on the first anniversary of our wedding day. I don't think we have seen him since. He was looking to break his journey at Bloemfontein on his way back and look up Joe and Blodwen.

Wednesday afternoon, 27th. It is Evelyn's birthday today. Hope she is having a happy time and will be spared to see many more. Thanks for all letters to hand this morning. Am glad to say I am much better and will do my best to take care of my self. The car has had a week's rest. I am hoping to use it again.

I hope I have not tired you with all this rambling news but it is one of my pleasures to keep in touch with you all as long as I can.

Much love to all and asking to be excused for all mistakes

Yours lovingly

Dad

53 Bree Street
Cradock
March 6th, 1935

My Dear All,

Thanks to those of you who have expressed their ability to make out what I have tried to communicate from time to time on this typewriter. I am very conscious of many mistakes in the work and so far as I can see, there is not much of interest in the weekly epistles. But as all of you have expressed the desire that they should be kept up, I am willing and pleased to comply as far as I can. One copy goes to England and your Uncle Willie says he finds much interest in reading them but of course, he only has met Douglas and all the rest of the family are known only by name.

Well, do not know that there is much to write about this week. So far as I am concerned, I am out of doctor's hands and am now about as usual. I have been getting up later in the mornings than formerly and now that the days are drawing in so rapidly, I expect I shall not get up much before seven, except on Wednesday mornings to do my weekly letter. I like to get this well in hand before the post is delivered about noon so that if there is anything to answer, it can be done at once. The sun does not rise until about seven and the last few mornings have been quite cool. In fact, last evening it turned so cold that I switched on our electric heater in the lounge as Mom was feeling it so cold. I had changed to go to Toc H meeting but had to give it up for the same reason. We are planning, if we can get the room next to the lounge as a spare room permanently added to our flat, we would put in a fireplace too but up against the one in the spare room (which used to be Aunt Letty's drawing room in my day). Then we would make a doorway into our passage and it would be very convenient. We could use the same chimney stack if we wanted to have a fire or perhaps we should only use the electric heater. I cannot understand why that room was not included in the flat when the house was divided.

We hear that Eric has disposed of his business at Rooispruit and will be going up to Vryburg on a visit almost at once. He wants to have a look round with a view to farming there. It will be nice for Douglas and Evelyn if this should materialise as Maude and Mike Meyers (Freda's sister and brother-in-law) are already settled there.

The young man at the Post Office who wants to change with Ted at Kroonstad is a married man and has again spoken about the matter. He suggests that perhaps he might take over Ted's plot so I am hoping that something may come of the negotiations. We must wait and see.

We heard over the wireless recently that our former neighbour at Vryburg, Mrs Gericke, was missing from her home in Pretoria. She has had a very unhappy marriage. Her husband deserted her for another woman I hear. I hope nothing serious has happened.

We called on the Mayor recently. He is Dossie (Dennison) de Kock's brother-in-law. Of course we enquired about her and were pleased to find that she and her husband were comfortably settled in Durban. It so happened that her baby was two years old the day we called. We had not heard of the arrival of No. two. Of course I wrote and we hope to hear from her in due course.

Douglas will have a very busy day on 29th as all the Ranch stock is being disposed of then. I should have thought that it would have been easier to have had the sale on the farm instead of bringing in over 1100 head of stock into Vryburg. I hope the sale is a success. We all wonder what is going to happen when Dr Compton goes to England. Suppose we shall know all in good time. Many enquiries have been made as to getting compensation for the 40 head of cattle that Douglas lost through locust poison. Douglas says he has claimed but nothing has been paid and he does not expect Government will do so.

Love from Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
13th March 1935

My Dear All,

I find it necessary to commence my weekly epistle before posting day as I cannot always be sure of finding sufficient time to do all that I want to accomplish. So I am starting this week at seven on Monday morning. The sun is much later in rising now. Daylight seems to begin about six and the sun rises in front of the lounge about a quarter to seven. We still have breakfast on the back stoep but it will soon be too cold for that. It will be nice having our evening meal there soon and perhaps in the depth of winter, we may find that we can have our dinner there. John, the boy, sweeps out the lounge first thing or rather second thing in the morning. The first is to make us a cup of tea which he does very successfully. While he is doing the lounge I bring the typewriter into the dining room but it is rather dull here. So far we have only used the electric heater once in the lounge. That was one evening when it turned very cold suddenly. Perhaps we will build a proper fireplace against the one that is in what used to be Aunt Letty's drawing room.

Tuesday. I had occasion to write to Dr Dommissie recently as his wife has not been well and he has resigned from the YMCA Board. In his reply, he remarked that probably the altitude and heat here was too much for us and he advised a lower altitude. We are here now and are not likely to get uprooted again in a hurry.

A few Sundays ago, we walked to the park and sat there for an hour or so. It brought back many memories of past days. How well I remember Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee when all the children in town planted rows of trees in the park. I have forgotten the exact tree that I planted with the Sunday School children but I know where it was. They have grown tremendously since then. The park is well kept but is not much patronised. There are a number of birds and a few animals kept in cages there. The children will be interested in watching some field mice doing tricks in their circular cage. A crowd of wild cranes or storks have made their nests in the tall trees and make a tremendous noise. The old sports ground is still used but has been laid down in grass instead of the old crack soil of my day. This is just beyond the park. The cemeteries are beyond this again. We have been to see Uncle James' grave a few times.

On Saturday afternoon, we took two ladies for a spin to the Marlow Plantation where we lived for several months when the children were quite small. We had a school there and in order to make up the required number of five pupils so as to secure a Government grant, we had Gladys to stay with us. I wonder if any of you remember the time and place. Perhaps we will take Gladys there when she comes. The house was in a very dilapidated state. I did not see anyone to speak to but evidently there are people living there. All the ground below the house has been converted into lands. It was on this place that I nearly shot our cow. One night we were out shooting spring hares with Harold and Douglas. They were holding the lantern and I was just going to fire when the cow mooed and so saved her life. It was whilst cycling from town to the plantation one Wednesday afternoon that I had a spill off my push bike – no motor bikes or cars in those far off days – and broke an artery in my leg. As a result we had to give up the plantation as I could not ride for several months. I had to come back to town and strange to say, our present dining room was Uncle James' spare room then and I was confined to bed for several weeks.

We hear from Douglas that there is a possibility of the children not coming to us for the Easter holidays after all. Changes are expected to take place sooner than was expected and it is on the boards that they may be leaving Scholtzfontein. Of course it is only natural that the children, as well as their parents, would like to be together for the last holiday on the farm where they have been brought up. We shall know in plenty of time what is going to happen. So far, it is settled that Gladys and her two boys are leaving Cape Town on Wednesday 27th, arriving here at 9.40 on Thursday night, 28th. They will be staying of course at Aunt Eliza's.

Mr Thomas has returned after three weeks rest at Rooispruit with Eric and Frieda. He is much better for the change. He brought news of changes there. Eric has disposed of his business to a son of Mr Turpin, chemist, of Middelburg. They take possession on 16th inst. Eric, Frieda and her sister are motoring to Vryburg, via Bloemfontein. They will stay a week or two with her sister and brother-in-law at Dry Harts whilst Eric will have a look round to see if he can find a suitable farm where he can settle. They will be greatly missed at Rooispruit. They are looking to come to Cradock before going away for good.

On Sunday, we had an attendance here of eleven to meeting. Mary, Guy and David Biggs (Louvale) stayed to dinner. Uncle Jack and Aunt Agnes had dinner with us also this week.

Correspondence is passing between Ted and a man in the Post Office who would like to change places. Such negotiations take a considerable time to put through. They have had good rains in Kroonstad we hear. It is more than we can say so far as Cradock is concerned.

Joe and Blodwen write that they are definitely looking to come to us at Easter. Miss Price will also come with them on her way back to Cape Town from her holiday. Mr Price is still a marvel how he keeps alive. Doctors gave him up a couple of years ago.

One of Reg's younger brothers is at the Glen Agricultural School near Bloemfontein and was spending last Sunday with Joe and Blodwen. They were looking to go over the place when they took him home. I have never been over the place.

Mom has to provide the refreshments next Monday at the Women's Auxiliary when they are saying farewell to Mr and Mrs Brown who are leaving here for the coast for a year at least as the climate does not agree with his health. They have both been very active workers in the Church.

There seems nothing fresh to report so will close with love to all,

From Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
20th March 1935

My Dear All,

I have not been able to start my circle early this week for various reasons. It is not yet 6.30 am and I am trying to do this by electric light. There are a number of engagements to be fulfilled during the day and so I must begin early. We have been experiencing some cold mornings lately but the sunshine during the day has been quite typical of the usual Karoo winter. My thermometer has not registered any frost but some is reported from some gardens.

Saturday, Sunday and Monday, I was not up to much. I do not know the cause unless it was that on Friday evening I fulfilled an engagement and gave a little talk at Rev Jordan's manse to the young people of the Baptist Church. This is the Minister who motored Uncle Joe to Alice and back. There were about twenty in his dining room. Mr Thomas was also there. It was quite an informal occasion and I asked to be excused if I spoke whilst sitting down. I took as my subject Friendship. However, I am feeling alright again today for which I am thankful.

Since writing last week, we have definite news that Douglas' children will not be able to come to us during these holidays as changes are taking place soon and it is practically certain that in the course of a few months, Douglas will be leaving Scholtzfontein, so this will be their last holiday on the farm where all the family has been brought up and where they have spent such happy times. We are, of course, disappointed but quite see the reasonableness of the position and must look forward to some future time when we can have the pleasure of having them with us. Douglas does not think it will be this June holidays. We are looking forward to seeing Gladys and her two boys next week. They are arriving on Tuesday night so as to be here in time for the show when they hope to see some of their country friends. Aunt Eliza has been making all sorts of preparations for the long looked for visit. The yard has been converted into a croquet court, balls and hoops specially painted for the occasion. The yard, or rather the court, is only about 27 feet square whereas a full size court should be 68 feet. No doubt they will get a great deal of fun out of it all the same. Perhaps I should not mention other things which have been arranged but leave them as surprises for them when they arrive.

Morning and afternoon teas seem to be in vogue just now. Last week, we were invited to Mrs Kissicks. We met her (and her late husband) last year at Rev Hornabrook's one Sunday afternoon, the occasion being his 84th birthday. As I was the only man friend present amongst a half dozen ladies, I soon withdrew after partaking of a nice cup of tea. On Monday afternoon, a farewell tea was given by the Womens' Auxiliary of the Methodist Church to Mr and Mrs Brown who are leaving for Port Alfred next week for health reasons. They have been very earnest workers in the Masters vineyard. Two or three other men were invited. Mom was hostess as the ladies take it in turns to provide tea. The WCTU are giving another similar affair this morning to which Mom will go. Two more functions are being held tomorrow so you see Mom is quite in the swim. So am I, sometimes. Monday evening Mom and I went to hear Dr Elsie Chub, daughter of Rev Chub who was at our wedding, give a lecture to the coloured people on health. Mary and a few other Europeans were present. It was quite worthwhile. Some of the questions put by the coloured people were interesting. Last evening Mom went with Mary to the bioscope for the first time. She enjoyed it. Voltaire was staged. I went to Toc H meeting and listened to a very interesting paper on astronomy given by one of the younger members. The immensity of space is truly wonderful. He stated that in the opinion of scientists, there is no other human existence as we know it on any other star or planet. This led me to remark upon the wonderful works of the Almighty.

With reference to the farewells to the Browns, Mr Brown was telling me that Uncle James practically died in his arms on the Sunday afternoon he gave an address to the young men in the Wesleyan church. He had spoken on the subject of temperance and spoke sitting down as he said he was not feeling well. One of the young men asked a question at the end of the

meeting which James did not quite hear and asked him to repeat same. Mr Brown was chairman of the meeting and noticed him falling forward and of course all assisted him.

Yesterday afternoon we had the pleasure of a visit from Mr and Mrs Dodd and Nessie and her children. They were very interested in hearing of all the family. Nessie is not farming but has a small place near a school. Mrs Dodd would like to be back in Cape Town but Mr Dodd seems to prefer the country life. Like me, he finds life very objectless. We are hoping they will come and spend a day with us when they come to town again.

We suppose Eric and Freda and Vera are in Vryburg by now. They were to leave Rooispruit on Monday morning by car for Bloemfontein where they looked to spend the night with Joe and Blodwen. They look to come to Cradock whilst Gladys is here. We hope to put them up as Aunt Eliza will be full up with Gladys and her boys. We shall be interested in hearing first hand news of Douglas and Evelyn from them.

Tomorrow will be Denis' 14th birthday. Hope he has a happy time. Two more anniversaries are coming up in the near future. I must try to write to those concerned.

Ernest's daughter, Dorothy, who passed her matric in December, will be 19 in a few days. She is going in for nursing and did not expect to be accepted before next year. However, she has received intimation that she is to start duty at the New Somerset Hospital on April 1st so there is a great hurry to get things ready. We had her and Christine to dinner on Sunday and Mary had supper with us the same day.

Tomorrow morning, Beryl is passing through from Uitenhage taking Eric's path home to Rooispruit. I hope to see her as she passes through.

Joe, Blodwen and her sister are definitely coming to us at Easter. We hope they will be able to arrive on the Thursday and as it is preaching day at Fish River on Easter Sunday, we may go out there and see them off by Monday morning's train. It will be easier for them and the children so early in the morning.

The demolishing of the old school building right opposite our flat has been proceeding very slowly ever since they started. We are now seeing a great improvement in what they have already taken away and when it is finished, the outlook will be a vast improvement upon what it was when we came. We have fine view of the building which was erected in our time and where Harold used to go to school. I don't remember if Douglas went to it or only to Rocklands kindergarten.

Correspondence is passing between Ted and the party in this Post Office regarding the possibility of their exchanging positions. Perhaps the man from here might go up to see Ted's place at Easter. We hope that whatever is right for all concerned will be done.

Later. I am reminded that Reg and Dot will be celebrating their ninth anniversary of their wedding day on 31st, the same day that David was born. How time flies. Letters just to hand from Grace, Blodwen and Lynne. Sorry to hear that Roy has had a bad fall and damaged a front tooth. Thanks for the nice photo of the children, Grace. Eric and Freda arrived in Bloemfontein on Monday evening.

Much love to all from
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
March 27th, 1935

My Dear All,

According to dates, this is my forty-eighth (48) anniversary of my arrival in Cradock. Strange that I should be writing from the same house in which I then lived. This week is also the 9th anniversary of Reg and Dot's wedding day and also the 9th anniversary of the arrival of Ted and Grace's David. Next week is Cicely's birthday (April 2nd). To one and all, many happy returns of the events.

On Friday last, we attended a very enjoyable organ recital in the Methodist church. Aunt Jessie and Enid came in especially for same. Aunt Jessie has been organist at the Fish River church for more years than I can tell. We had arranged to return with them after the concert and spend the weekend at Uncle Herbert's. We arrived there just at 11 pm, Enid of course drove their car. Saturday was spent quietly at the house. I found a few jobs that needed attention, such as a door that would not shut properly. I took out a few of my tools and was able to take off the lock and with the assistance of a plane of very ancient date, was able to make same right. The round table in the spare room, which some of you who have occupied that room might remember, needed attention. It must be a matter of years since the top of the table was fixed. It has simply rested on the stand, consequently it was never enough to write at or put anything on it with any degree of safety. It is firm now but it was some job. The whole house wants renovating. Ted repaired part of the veranda some years ago. It is still standing but the need for more supports is apparent. Everyone was very busy getting ready for the show. The farmers of Fish River are having their own exhibit as a sort of "shop window". Sunday afternoon we went to see Uncle Jack and Aunt Agnes. They are quite well and as friendly as ever.

They came down to HJC in the evening. Whilst there, we experienced a sharp thunderstorm. There was plenty of wind, thunder and lightning but only a very little rain. During the evening, Aunt Jessie played a number of hymns which we all enjoyed. We returned by early train on Monday morning and arrived home about eight. Unfortunately our boy did not turn up all day and only came next day after we had breakfast. We let him off after dinner. Today (Wednesday) he came late and said he had not been able to sleep all night so as it is our half holiday and the show is on, we shall not require him in the afternoon. I met Gladys last evening and the boys. It was wet all the way from Beaufort West and it rained nearly all night. It is wet for the show today. Aunt Rosa and Uncle Joe Maskell came down by car and are staying at the hotel. We had quite a family gathering at the hotel last evening with them and Uncles and Aunts. We are sorry to hear from Ruth that she has to have another operation on her nose, similar to the trouble she had some years ago.

We are thinking of Douglas and Evelyn's move and the sale this week and hope it will be a success. Eric and Freda are there now. We expect they will come to see Gladys whilst she is here.

I must not attempt to write more this week as we are going to the show this afternoon and I have an appointment this evening. Am sorry not to be able to reply to recent letters to hand today but will try to do better next week. We are both keeping well, I am glad to say.

Much love to all

Dad

I have made a mistake in saying that I arrived here on this date. I left England then and arrived here on 27th April 1887.

53a Bree Street
Cradock
April 3rd, 1935

My Dear All,

Last week my letter was somewhat hurried owing to the agricultural show and so many visitors being in town. It was a good show but none of you are sufficiently interested in details regarding stock and general exhibits that I need to spend any time in describing them. Sufficient to say I sent Douglas a couple of Midland News with the prize list in so that he could see what was going on. The show provided something of a family gathering. All Mother's brothers and sisters, except Aunty Letty, Uncles Owen and Gervase, were in town. Uncle Norman and his wife and two children stayed with us. We did not have to get the adjoining room as the children slept in the lounge with their mother and Norman occupied the back stoep. Talking about family gatherings, my attention has been drawn to a paragraph in the Herald that a Maritzberg family claims to have established a world's record for longevity. There are eleven surviving children whose total ages at the end of 1935 will be 748 years, an average of 68 years each. I compared this with the Collett family tree and find that with twelve surviving, their ages at the end of 1935 will total 835 years or an average of exactly 69 years and seven months. That is something to be proud of.

Mom and I attended a sale on Saturday afternoon and bought a few more things which we needed. These included a garden seat which we have placed at our lounge window; a couple of nice ornamental flower pots with plants, also placed at the front door; some flower vases and a beautiful floating bowl. Things were very cheap and we had a good deal of amusement out of the sale.

We are sorry to hear from Ruth that she has had to have another operation on her nose. Further treatment is necessary. They have now left Dorset House and are living with her parents. Her address will still be c/o Public Library. Denis is going to Kingswood as a boarder from the next term. Ruth has purchased a wireless set and same gives them all a great deal of pleasure. Every morning at seven a news service is on the air. I am not always up in time for it now as I do not always rise as early as I used to do. It is dark now.

Douglas writes that Arthur Collen is having trouble again with his leg. You will remember that he came to Cape Town for treatment some time ago as he injured it when he fell from a horse. It has been very awkward for Douglas as he has been so busy with getting stock ready for the big sale. We have not heard how the sale went off last Friday. I do not think we shall go to the Vryburg show as I find that excursion fares only apply to stations within 150 miles from Vryburg. Perhaps when we "do" the Game Reserve, we might pick up Dot on the way back and call at Vryburg and see Douglas and Evelyn's new home. We have been strongly advised that the best time for seeing the wild animals in the Reserve will be about August. We shall discuss the whole matter with Joe when he comes down at Easter time. I have collected a number of maps and information regarding the routes, fees etc. At the show I had a good look at the motor cars. The new 1935 Ford V8 and the Plymouth 1935 as well as the Chev were all good but I much prefer an English one if I can get it. However, I have decided to order a set of five Air wheels as my tyres are getting thin and see what effect these have over the corrugations. If they give us the extra comfort we desire so, well and good, if not, then I shall have to face the problem of getting a new car. One firm has offered to allow 140/- on my Morris if I take a 1934 model Plymouth or 150/- if I take a Lafayette sedan. Ford will allow 100/- if I take a V8.

We are very pleased with the snap Grace has sent of the four children. It is very good of all of them. It seems as though the exchange with a local man in the Post Office is off for the present. It may materialise later on.

Gladys and her boys seem to be enjoying themselves. We took them out to the Warm baths one morning and the children had a dip. Toc H had arranged to entertain thirty boys of the town at a camp there for a week's holiday. All the boys were specially selected as being in need

of such a change. They are enjoying themselves immensely. We may go again this afternoon as sports have been arranged for them.

The pulling down of the old boys' school opposite our flat has been proceeding very slowly. It is so far done right in front of us that we have a greatly improved view of the building in the street above. Our light is also improved and the general outlook is much better. It has also opened up another possibility for us. I have been offered a nice vacant erf in Sprigg Street for £130, together with a complete plan for a new house which could be erected on same very cheaply. Many of the bricks which are being taken out of the old school building could be used for inside walls and all the timber necessary for roofs, joists etc. is available. I do not know if anything will come of it but it is worth considering as a speculation.

We have not heard how Eric and Freda have got on at Vryburg. We expect they will come to town to see Gladys before she leaves on Monday next for Cape Town. We are anxious to hear how Douglas got on with the sale of stock. Joe will also be anxious as he was selling all his cattle at the same sale.

We are sorry to hear that Dot has had a touch of tick bite fever. Reg says it does not occur more than once. She was not laid up with it but felt queer. She suggests that if our Game Reserve trip comes off in the spring, she may perhaps return with us and Reg thinks he might be able to fetch her from Kroonstad. This is a very happy suggestion and I hope it will materialise. It is something for us to look forward to.

I went to the station on Monday night to see if Blodwen's brother and sister-in-law were passing. They were not on the train so I suppose they must have gone to Port Elizabeth by the garden route. We have not heard definitely which day Joe and Blodwen and her sister are arriving. We will get the room next door ready as soon as we know. Easter will soon be here now.

English mail is a day late this week. We have had some nice rains lately. These seem to have been general.

Since writing the above, I have just been informed that the erf referred to above has been sold to another party this morning. So there is nothing more to be said on that point.

Letters from Dot, Blodwen and some from overseas are just to hand. I am sorry I forgot to mention Joe and Blodwen's anniversary of their wedding day. I must compile a wedding birthday book as well as the births of the family. We have just experienced a sharp storm but it was soon over.

Joe and Blodwen look to be here about the 18th.

Much love to you all

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
April 10th, 1935

My Dear All,

It is Tuesday morning and I am trying to get post ready for tomorrow. First let me say that yesterday morning we received a wire from Blodwen saying that her father passed away on Sunday and was being cremated on Monday. We have just received a letter from her saying that she was expecting the end was quite near, so they were prepared for the shock. Her sister, Bessie, is still with her, I am glad to say. When they wrote, they had not had the news so we do not know what their plans may be for Easter now that the end has come. No doubt Mrs Price and her daughter, who have been nursing Mr Price for years, will need to get away as soon as possible and we know they were looking to go to Bloemfontein. We must await further news. Up to the present, we are expecting Joe, Blodwen and her sister, Bessie, to arrive here on Thursday 18th.

Wednesday afternoon, 10th. Eric and Freda left just before dinner for Redlands (Uncle Owen's home). Eric has made a number of enquiries regarding farms in these parts and all land seems to be far too high. He is not in a position to buy land at present and as Douglas has offered him a couple of camps – about 1500 morgen – with a small house on it at £5 per month, it looks as though he may soon go up there alone and see what he can do. Freda suggests that she might go nursing in Uitenhage – where she thinks she could earn £16 per month and educate the children at the same time. We shall await their decision with interest. They speak very highly of the kindness shown them whilst up there by Douglas and Evelyn and of course Mike and Maude. It was unfortunate that Douglas was so frightfully overworked in connection with the big sale of stock etc whilst they were there. Eric says the sale was a great success.

We hope as soon as things get a little easier to hear from Douglas, Freda and Evelyn as to their future plans etc. Joe's cattle was sold at the same time and he writes that he was surprised at receiving a cheque for about £500 as his proceeds. It has been a very good investment so far as he is concerned. Gladys and her boys were along this morning to say goodbye. They return to Cape Town tomorrow morning after having altered their plans two or three times. It has been very nice seeing them but we have not had the opportunity of entertaining them as we should have liked.

We have had very pressing invitations from Rev and Mrs Legg (formerly of Vryburg) to go and visit them. We shall look to do so as soon as a way opens. We shall look to visit the Biggs at the same time, also Mrs Garnett and other Friends and relations. Denis is due here at the end of the month.

During Eric and Freda's visit, our boy was away sick two days which did not add to our comfort but we managed to get through as everyone did something to help. The work of removing the boys' school building right opposite our flat is nearing completion and we have a very much better and brighter outlook. We shall be glad when it is all finished. The new air wheels for my car have not yet arrived but are expected this week.

I must not attempt another sheet this week but must thank those of you who have written. Glad to hear that all are well in the various homes and trust that the coming winter will not be too severe for any of you.

Much love to each and all as though named individually,
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
April 17th, 1935

My Dear All,

Tuesday. We have received word this morning definitely that Blodwen, her sister and the two babies will be here on Thursday morning. We expect Joe the same evening or next morning as he had to sit for his bilingual examination on Wednesday evening. We are looking forward to the visit and are only sorry that it is going to be so short. They leave on Monday morning for Bloemfontein again. We are now awaiting news as to when to expect Denis for his holiday. If the weather stays as it has been for the past week or so, it will be very nice indeed.

We had a long letter from Douglas yesterday, the first we have received since the big sale. This event seems to have been a huge success, both from the organisation point of view as well as the financial. We do hope that Douglas will have a much easier time from now onwards. As I write, I expect he is in Johannesburg for the show. He speaks of taking a trip to Bloemfontein, Brandfort to which place the Amblers are being transferred early in May and then going on to see Reg and Dot at Potgietersrus.

Wednesday morning. I took delivery of the air wheels yesterday afternoon and so far I am pleased with them. I do not notice any difference in the steering or driving of the car. It certainly is much better over the corrugations than before. I have six old wheels now for disposal so if any of you want them, speak quickly and give your offer for them complete with tyres and tubes. They are not all in too good condition.

So far this week I have been kept pretty busy. Sunday morning I had the service in the Methodist church and last night I gave a talk at the Toc H meeting on Cradock half a century ago. I was only asked to give it a day or so beforehand so did not have much time for preparation. However, they seem to have been interested and asked for more.

Gladys and the boy left on Thursday morning. We did not see very much of them but it was nice having Eric and Freda here at the same time. We shall be interested in hearing what Eric and Freda decide to do for the future. It seems most likely they will go to Vryburg. Probably Eric will go first and see how he gets on and if he can find a suitable place to start farming.

We are sorry to hear that poor old Col Rogers is not well. It will be a happy release if he is called away.

Mary is expected back from her three week's holiday today or tomorrow. She has had a nice time at Graaff Reinet.

Our programme for the next few days will be to entertain Joe and Blodwen and her sister. Good Friday we shall go to service I expect. On Sunday we go to Fish River service and all sleep there (not in service I hope). Monday they return to Bloemfontein and we spend a few days visiting relations. Thursday we have arranged a surprise party at Groenkloof as it is Uncle Walter's 80th birthday. I have written to all the brothers and sisters suggesting we all meet there in the afternoon. Don't suppose Aunt Letty will come from Graaff Reinet. I have ordered a cake with 80 candles for the occasion. We look to be back at the flat by Friday 20th, when we hope Denis will arrive about the 27th. Please post as usual to Cradock and I can advise the local office to direct if necessary. The 25th will be the anniversary of Uncle Joe's passing away, how quickly time flies. The 27th will be the 48th anniversary of my arrival in Cradock.

We are experiencing fairly cold nights but so far have not had any frost. We are both keeping well and glad of letters from Grace this morning. Ted is having a fortnight's leave at present. Wish he would take a run down here for a few days. I must not start another sheet. Hope to write as usual next week but may be a day or too late as I don't think I will take the typewriter with me.

Lots of love from
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
(Fish River)
April 24th, 1935

My Dear All,

At the moment I am writing from Aunt Agnes' farm, Retreat, on Tuesday morning, 23rd. I do not know if I shall be in time to catch the usual mail but unless I begin, I do not know when I shall be able to finish.

There is more to write about this week than usual and less time to do it in than usual so I must try to be brief. Well, we have had the first of our family to visit us after having been in Cradock for over six months.

Joe wired on Thursday afternoon that all of them would be arriving on Thursday morning. They did. The train was only a few minutes late and of course I was there with the car. We soon settled down to breakfast and had a general look round. They seemed pleased with the arrangements of the flat, furniture etc. We had secured the room next door for Blodwen and her sister and they took charge of baby Merle whilst Joe had the folding seat and had Roy in his bed. We were all very comfortable and enjoyed ourselves. We went about a good deal. One afternoon we all went out to the Warm bath, Joe and I had a swim. On Good Friday afternoon, we all went to Lake Arthur. We had not been there before. It is a fine sheet of water, but the dam is rapidly filling up with silt. This is happening much quicker here than in the Grass Ridge Dam. Of course we took our afternoon tea with us. Miss Price had to return to Cape Town on Saturday morning so as to begin her work on Monday morning. She has put on about nine pounds in weight whilst she was away. One afternoon we went out to the egg rock on the commonage and Joe took some snaps of it. I had not been there for years. Mary had arranged a sort of Friends picnic for the day so we met them there. Miss Garnett from Graaff Reinet was there as well as two ladies who had motored from East London that morning, doing the distance (200 miles) in five hours.

On Sunday morning we motored out to Fish River and attended morning service. Everyone was pleased to see Joe looking so well. He minded the two babies whilst Blodwen and the rest of us were in service. Rev Barnes conducted the service. There was only 17 sat down to dinner at Uncle Herbert's. Turkey etc was served. In the afternoon, we chatted and later on we took Joe and Blodwen to Retreat (Uncle Jack's farm) where they spent the night. Mom and I motored up to the station in the morning and saw them off to Bloemfontein by the eight twenty train. It has been a great pleasure having them with us even for so short a visit. They are the first of our family to visit us and we hope it will not be long before others come. Later on, on Monday, we motored to Retreat where we spent the night and on Tuesday visited Winnie and Harvey Brown on their farm. After afternoon tea, we motored to Katkop (where I am now typing this on Uncle Norman's stoep) and we slept here last night. We shall be leaving very soon for Uncle Herbert's so as to be able to meet Denis by the eleven pm train tonight. In the morning we are going up to dinner at the Saunders and from there to Groenkloof to wish Uncle Walter congratulations on reaching his 80th birthday. I had written to all the brothers and sisters suggesting that they give him a surprise party. I have a cake here with 80 candles on it and am looking forward to a happy reunion. Uncle Gervase has already arrived from Uitenhage for the event. We sleep at Grass Ridge on Thursday night and return to our flat sometime on Friday. I have not been able to go into details of our visit as time does not permit. One does not like to be unsociable when on a visit to your friends. It has been very cold at night and there was a sharp frost last night. Everyone says they are very pleased to see us and we also are pleased to see them. My new air wheels are a great success. We hardly feel the corrugations. I do not know when you will get this letter but will post it today hoping that you are all well. Expect to get a big post when we get back.

Much love from
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
Wednesday May 1st, 1935

My Dear All,

I am sorry to have to commence my letter this week on a sad note. It is Tuesday morning. Yesterday morning we received two postcards from Evelyn from Kimberley saying that on Friday morning early (probably during the night) they had to rush Douglas to Kimberley Hospital suffering from an acute attack of appendicitis. Mr Tilley, their assistant, went with them (probably to drive). The operation was performed immediately and I am pleased to say is apparently successful. We shall all await further news from day to day with anxiety. Douglas has had far too much worry and anxiety on his shoulders for a long time past and this is no doubt a reaction. I do hope he will take heed of the warning note thus given. It is additionally awkward for him by the fact that his right hand man, Collin, has had to go to Cape Town again on account of the injury to his knee a year or two ago. We do not yet know where Evelyn is staying in Kimberley but letters addressed to the Hospital will find him.

We also hear that Reg has been bitten by tics and has consequently suffered an attack of tic bite fever. Last reports were that he was better after a time of severe shivering and perspiration. Fortunately after one attack, they are said to be immune.

Grace writes that Ted was taking some of his holiday at home. He is entitled to a good deal of arrear leave and hopes to visit his parents later in the year. We had hoped he would have been able to take a run down here for a few days, and still hope this may happen. They are expecting to make their long needed alterations to their house as soon as the building society agrees.

Joe and Blodwen have been given to understand that their rent may be raised by £8 per month from June. I can hardly think this is possible as they are paying £6.10 now and the house is small. They arrived home safely and the children seem to be better. Blodwen was afraid that she was in for appendicitis shortly after she got home but the doctor declared it was flatulence. I hope this was not due to overfeeding whilst here. We wish their visit could have been longer but hope for another occasion of seeing them.

Last week my letter was very hurried. I did it at Uncle Norman's (Katkop) with their smaller children around me. They were very interested in the machine. I was only able to give a very rough outline of our visit. We enjoyed every minute of the five days we were away. We were pleased to see so many relations and friends and they seemed pleased to see us. They are all very busy people but found time to talk to us. Having our car, we were able to be independent so far as getting about was concerned. We found the new air wheels a great success. The jolting over the corrugations were not nearly so noticeable as formerly. I did not detect any difference in the steering except perhaps it was a trifle easier than formerly. Joe made a slight adjustment in the driving standard whilst here. We found that 30 to 35 miles an hour is quite comfortable for driving. The roads for the most part were fairly good.

We took a new game with us called Lexicon which they all seemed to enjoy.

At Uncle Jack's daughter's home, Winnie Brown, their little girl, had met with a nasty accident the day before. It appears that she and her brother were swinging on some bags of mealies which were hanging by wire from a roof when the wire broke and she was buried under three bags which weigh about 203 lbs each. Fortunately she was not very seriously hurt except that her right eye became closed and her arm was sore but not broken. It is a wonder she was not crushed to death. At Uncle Norman's, one of their boys had a broken arm. He fell whilst at school at Grahamstown. They have four boys and one daughter. She is lonely and painfully quiet. Uncle Norman returned from a trip to the Basutoland border whilst we were there. He had been up to see about some rams he had sent up for sale. He was surprised to see how the country is being destroyed by soil erosion. He was also impressed with the beautiful stone for building purposes he saw there.

Wednesday evening after posting my last circle letter, we met Denis at the station at 11.15 pm. We played Lexicon until about eleven when Mom went to bed and Enid and I met the train. After cups of hot cocoa, we retired. Denis had met Aunt Jessie when we went to Grahamstown in December last so was not a stranger. He was interested in seeing the big horses and bulls etc. We went for a little walk to the river and he saw lots to interest him, especially knowing that his father had been on the same spots. After morning tea, we went to Highlands, Willie Saunders, for dinner. We had promised a long time ago to pay them another visit so as their farm is next to Uncle Walter's, we decided to drop in for dinner. We had previously arranged to do so. Although the farms are adjoining each other, it takes nearly an hour by car from one to the other, not that the distance is so very great but the road has to go a long way round owing to fences and hills between. Although they have a large family, only one son is staying at home and managing the farm. The others are mostly married except two daughters and they are frequently out nursing. I am glad to say that the trouble for which I took Willie Saunders to England in 1902 (cancer in the lip) had not recurred again for which he is very thankful. I reminded him that on that day last year (25th), brother Joe had passed away. We stayed with Joe and Sophia when we landed in England.

I think I told you in my last that I had, after consultation with some of members of the Collett family, arranged for as many as possible of the brothers and sisters to meet at Uncle Walter's home on the afternoon to greet him on attaining his 80th birthday. Some thought that he should be advised beforehand so consequently this was done. Nine cars turned up about 2.30 and Uncle was very pleased at the reception he received. As a rule, he hates any fuss or ceremony but he entered fully into the spirit of the occasion. It was a perfect afternoon and thirty one were present. Uncle Gervase came all the way from Uitenhage for the event and returned the same evening. Only four out of the twelve brothers and sisters were absent. Aunt Letty and Rosa and Uncles Owen and Bertie were not there. We took out a cake with 80 candles on it and Uncle was thrilled as he entered the room when they were all lit. I asked him if he remembered the journey he took with me the first time I ever went out of Cradock when he got so seasick that he wanted to get out of the cart and die, he was so ill. It was also a very dark night and we could not see the road so he asked me to get out and walk in front of the horses with a handkerchief behind my back. The native boy he had with him had got drunk in Cradock so he had tied him on behind the buggy and in the course of the journey, he had dropped off but was at the farm as usual the next morning. My brother John made a sketch of the incident at the time. Uncle Walter remembered it and enjoyed a good laugh about it. His old friend, Ted Gilfillan, made a short speech at the afternoon tea and Rev Barnes supplemented it. A number of snaps were taken, some by Denis and the others by Enid. Unfortunately the light got to some that Denis took but they give some idea of the gathering. The others we have not seen yet. Everyone voted the function a great success. Uncle Herbert said he hoped everyone would turn up to his 80th birthday in three years time. The camera Denis used was one borrowed by one of the party. We slept at Grass Ridge that night and played more Lexicon. The old home is still much the same as in our old days. It was interesting showing Denis the old rocking horse on which Harold and all the grandchildren played. By the way, Douglas sent them a new tail for the old horse as the old one has been pulled to pieces.

The ground round the house has been improved in recent years by the enclosing of more ground and planting saltbush and other plants. Aunt Kate is cultivating a Karoo garden just above the tennis court. In the morning, we motored up to show Denis the Grass Ridge dam. Aunt Kate and a niece, Mrs Kritzinger, who was staying with her, accompanied us. The dam is not full but presents a very fine sheet of water. The view from the dam wall is very fine (for those who have good eyesight). We left Grass Ridge after dinner and called at Uncle Herbert's on our way to town. It being Friday, our going in saved Aunt Jessie and Enid the necessity of going as well as we were able to do the delivering of their market stuff. We buy a fowl and two dozen eggs and one or two pounds of butter from them every week. We came in comfortably in

50 minutes and soon got unpacked and settled down. Since then we have been kept more or less busy taking Denis about as much as we can. He has made fast friends with Jeffrey.

It is Tuesday afternoon and we have received the following telegram from Douglas "Eating, Sleeping, Drinking, Smoking, Smiling, Everything splendid, Love". This is really fine news and we trust that he will continue to make good progress. I think the enforced rest will be the very best thing for him. We shall be very glad if he and Evelyn can come down as soon as possible and recuperate for a time.

Wednesday early morning. The sun rose at 7.10 shining right into our lounge where I am typing this so as to be free to read the family letters as soon as they come about eleven am. Our boy has also just come, he is due at 7 and makes a cup of tea for us first thing and then gets breakfast ready. Whilst that is in progress, he sweeps out the lounge, passage and dining room and by that time, breakfast is ready and so are we.

We took Denis out yesterday afternoon to see the Warm baths and Scanlen. He also went over the Midland News works and now has his name set in linotype.

Ruth has sent on his quarterly school report. He is again first in his form out of 42 pupils. The report says "Character Excellent". Everyone has fallen in love with him and we are very proud of him. He has to return to Grahamstown next Tuesday evening as he is going to be a boarder at Kingswood from the following week and Ruth wants to see to his outfit etc. We wish it had been possible for her to be here with him. He has enjoyed sleeping out on the back stoep. He spent one morning at Aunt Eliza's and was very interested in all he saw there. We are trying to arrange a trip to Tarka to see George and Hilda Collett who are doubly related to him. He has been there before.

Last evening we had a very short visit from Florrie and Alice Biggs. They and their husbands had motored from Louisvale and Graaff Reinet via Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown to see their children and are spending a night at Ernest's. Mary was with them and they were very interested in seeing over our little flat which of course was part of their old home. We are hoping to see more of them but like all the Biggs, they are in a great hurry to get back to their homes. Douglas wrote recently that Jamie called on them at Vryburg and thought he would be seeing us soon. So far none of the Poplar folk have heard of his coming. We have had a very interesting call from old Mrs Billingham who was in Vryburg for some years. She seemed to remember all of you. The Mayoress also called yesterday. She is Dossie Dennison's sister-in-law. Very nice lady. The Biggs have called to say goodbye. They are motoring to Graaff Reinet this morning. I must not attempt another sheet this week as I am sure you will be tired of reading all my gossip. I expect you find it difficult to read it all. We are both keeping well and the weather is very nice now.

Much love to you all as though named,
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
May 5th, 1935

My Dear All,

It is Tuesday evening and the wireless is going strong. I think it is the Mikado that is being rendered which we remember being staged at Vryburg in Mr Vlok's time. Mom and I are listening to it and wonder if any others of the family are also listening. I see I am wrong. It is the Pirates of Penzance, not the Mikado. It is very good.

Well, the holidays are over and we were favoured with delightful weather. We did not go to Fish River on Wednesday, as at first arranged, as we found it would be more useful to go out on Thursday and take out some passengers. Mom was averse to making an early start on these cold mornings. So we waited for Mary as she could not get away before 10.30. We took Mr Thomas and David Biggs. The latter stayed out there for the weekend. By the time we arrived (about 11.20), practically all the produce had been sold. It was very nice seeing so many of the relations and friends. There was fully 250 people there. Also we counted 50 motorcars. Cradock and Fish River played a tennis tournament all day. The luncheon served in two or three sittings was exceptional (2/- per head) and was well worth it. After everyone was served, they had a dozen cooked fowls over as well as some legs of venison. We managed to secure something here. Enid left for Cape Town the same morning of the fete and was greatly missed. Mary returned with us as David spent the weekend at Uncle Norman's. They stayed and had supper with us. We came back via Baroda and the top road which is much prettier than the more direct route.

Friday, Union day, we did not go anywhere. We have taken a few friends about for short spins and they all seem to enjoy them. It is a little service which is always appreciated. We are thankful to have got drier weather lately and hope it will continue. The sun rises at 7.30 right in the front door of our lounge and sets about 5 pm. Now that the old school building has been completely removed, we are getting the advantage of a much extended view and also more sun as the old building cast a long shadow across the street. We are finding much comfort from having the fireplace in the lounge. Some days when it is very cold, we have a fire going all day. Mom does not care to go out at all such days.

This week is a busy one for me as I find I am down to speak at four different meetings.

Uncle Bertie's daughter, Iris, is going to stay with Aunt Jessie, now that Enid has left. She is trying it as an experiment for a time.

I find I have made a mistake by saying at the top of my letter that it was Tuesday evening. It was Monday. I am writing this now at seven fifteen on Tuesday morning. I have to begin early as there are so many interruptions.

Our boy, John, was alright on Saturday but did not turn up on Sunday and in fact has only just come now (Tuesday). He says he was sick. It makes it very awkward but I manage to give Mom her breakfast in bed as usual. I have told him that we shall probably be away for some weeks so he can look out for another job. If he is here when we return, we shall be glad to have him. He is the best servant we have ever had. This brings me to interesting question of our holiday. So many of you have urged us to get away from the cold to a warmer climate as soon as we can. We have therefore suggested that we leave here for Bloemfontein about 22nd, spend Sunday 23rd with Edith, who we expect will be with Blodwen when Joe is away, and we might also have one day in Kroonstad just to see Grace and Ted's alteration and then go on to Johannesburg and motor from there to Reg and Dot's. Joe and I would then do the Game Reserve, returning to Dot and Joe would have to return by train. We would look to stay some time there and then motor to Douglas and Evelyn in their new home, returning either via Kroonstad and Bloemfontein. I have written to the Railway for particulars.

Much love

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
May 8th, 1935

My Dear All,

I think last week I must have wearied you all with three sheets of a letter. This week I will not be able to do so as I have contracted a nasty cold and am typing this lying in bed on Tuesday morning and am not able to see the keyboard. We motored Denis and Jeffrey out to George and Hilda's farm on Saturday morning leaving them there and we returned home to dinner. I think I must have affected my cold then. Sunday we forgo the service in the evening, although it was Sunday school anniversary. Mrs Dodd and Nessie brought Denis and Jeffrey back from the farm, I went to bed early. Monday was the great day of the Jubilee.

Wednesday morning. I am still in bed but am glad to say I am feeling better. No doubt you all heard the King's speech and also the Governor General's. I could hear them fairly well lying in bed.

Letter from Douglas this morning says he will be staying in Kimberley until Monday when he hopes to go home. Joe ran over from Bloemfontein on Saturday to see him. It was just like Joe to do this. Douglas says we had better cut them out so far as arranging our trip to the Game Reserve. We have asked Edith Collett to visit us about June 20th. Mrs Price and daughter are due at Joe and Blodwen's on Monday next.

Denis left last evening and I hope was safely arrived at home by now. Mom saw him off as I could not go. Mary invited us all to tea last Thursday and we had reading evensong afterwards. Another evening, Aunt Eliza had us for games etc. Denis also had some meals there and at The Poplars. Jeffrey has spent a good deal of the time with Denis here. We have been very pleased to have him and hope he will come again.

Grace writes that she hopes the alterations to their house will be put in hand shortly.

Owing to the public holiday and irregularity of the post, we have not received Dot's usual letter this week. I hope she had a happy birthday on Sunday.

I find it very awkward to work like this, so will stop. Please excuse all mistakes.

Much love as ever from
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
May 15th, 1935

My Dear All,

Last week my letter was the shortest and less interesting of any that I have written. This week, I am glad to say that my cold is somewhat better and I am able to be up and about as usual. I still cough a good deal and it is a case of carrying about with me a battery of pocket handkerchiefs. I have only once been out in the evening for about a fortnight. Enough about myself. To add to our discomfort, our boy has not turned up to work since Saturday night. However, we are both very domesticated persons so are able to get along fairly easily. It is a great nuisance nevertheless. It has just struck seven am and the boy has not turned up but perhaps he will later on. He sent a note yesterday asking for money as he had toothache badly. So that's that. We hope for the best. Aunt Eliza lent us her Dora yesterday for a while so that was some help.

Letters continue to give news of Douglas. He has left the hospital and by now I expect he is safely back at Scholtzfontein. His boss, Dr Compton, went to see him whilst in hospital and sent his motor to take him to his house. He (Douglas) is to stay a month longer at the Ranch so will be there till the end of June. It was exceedingly nice and thoughtful of Joe to run over from Bloemfontein on Saturday and spend a few hours with him in hospital. Both brothers were very delighted. We are sorry that Douglas did not see his way clear to come and spend some time with us before returning to the farm but of course he felt that he should be on the spot to look after the work. Arthur Collen, who had to go to Cape Town again about his knee, is back again on the farm. Douglas has bought a new car, I don't know what make. He has decided not to go to the Game Reserve with us as he will have a carload in themselves when they do go. Not only so, but he thinks that if we all went together, it would be too much of a strain on the limited accommodation of Dot's home. I do not expect he will be allowed to do any motoring for some time owing to his recent operation. Douglas and Joe discussed the matter when together in Kimberley and it seems that our plans will now mature on much of the following lines, as suggested by Joe in a recent letter. We are to truck our car to Johannesburg or Pretoria and then motor to Potgietersrus, leaving Mom there whilst we do the Reserve, which we could comfortably do in a week, including visits to neighbouring places. As we are expecting Edith Collett about the end of June on a visit, we would look to start early in July. The excursion fares cease to be issued on July 5th, I think, if that will be any consideration. Joe suggests that perhaps Edith could stay with Blodwen whilst he is away. It would be a nice arrangement if it could be arranged, which I think might easily be done. Mom and I might spend some time with Dot and then bring her back with us, calling at Vryburg on the way back. There is also the possibility of Grace and Ted joining in the scheme as they will probably want to be away in July on account of it being such a windy month and also their building operations may be in full swing at that time. Joe no doubt would have to use his free pass for the return trip as he would not be able to stay as long as we would want to do. So he would, of course, like to visit Reg's people as well as Douglas and we could call on Grace and Joe on the return trip if desired or we could come straight down from Vryburg by car. Let me know your views as soon as possible please.

Joe has sent us such a nice set of snaps which he took here at Easter. I am sending them with this to Grace and she must send them on to Dot and Dot to Douglas and back to me. If any of you want copies, please let me know. The views taken on the house give you some idea of our outlook. We wonder who will be the next members of the family to come and see us.

Blodwen writes that she is experiencing servant trouble. Her maid packed up her goods and chattels and left suddenly one morning. It must be very awkward with two babies to look after. Now her Mother and Sister are with her too so that will be very nice for them to be all together. I expect they will like Bloemfontein.

Grace and Ted write that the Building Society has not yet decided what they are going to do about the house additions. It will be very awkward whilst alterations are in progress. When

completed, it will be an additional attraction for us to go and see. They seem to be doing a big poultry business at Kroonstad.

Reg and Dot have both got over their attacks of tic bite fever and hope there will be no recurrence of same. They have their own car now which gives additional pleasure. The new church is to be opened in June. We shall hope to renew friendships there before very long. We shall try to see something of the Organes at Pietersburg when we pass through. I wonder if we could see Willie Saunders at Naboomspruit as well. I would also like to see Barberton and Pilgrims Rest.

The weather since the Jubilee has been more like Cape Town winter than the usual dry Karoo winter. For some days, we hardly saw the sun. Rain has been falling all over the country and we hear of flooded rivers and roads being impassable. Jamie and his wife and three children are on their way by car from Louisvale to Graaff Reinet, Port Elizabeth and Cradock and were held up between two rivers and delayed for over a day or more before they could get to Graaff Reinet. He is getting a new car in Port Elizabeth. We are looking forward to seeing them again. We understand that Aunt Letty has gone to Louisvale for the winter months.

Denis goes into Kingswood as a border from today. It was so nice having him here. He and Jeffrey used to love squatting or laying on the floor playing their games.

The Jubilee celebrations seem to have been most successful in the old country. I listened in as much as possible and as a rule got good reception. The description of the triumphal journey from Buckingham Palace was very fine. It seemed too wonderful that we could hear the cheers of the millions of people as the King approached Ludgate Hill and St Pauls. We probably heard the service better than many of those who were inside St Pauls. It is very wonderful to think that millions of people all over the world were listening at the same moment to the voice of the King.

Later. The boy has turned up and we live again. He will have to have some of his teeth out.

Aunt Eliza has had all the front of her house painted and it looks very nice. She talks of repapering her sitting room next year.

Letters to hand from Grace and Dot since commencing this letter. Grace says they are starting the additional room at once. It is going to be very awkward whilst the work is in progress. Dot says Norman has not been too well but otherwise all are very happy in their environment.

Rev Barnes tells me this morning the Methodist Synod is to meet here in August and wants my assistance. It commences about 10th so if I am to be of any help, I should be back by the end of July. Unless we started after the Synod, I don't want to have to hurry over the route as we have had to do in former years. Must stop now. Thanks for all enquiries re our health. No rain has fallen today so far. Hope you are all keeping well and with love to all.

Your loving
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
May 15th, 1935

My Dear All,

News received from Douglas say he is home and is much better. Is eating better than he has done for years and is also feeling better in every way. He has had, as was only to be expected, a very warm welcome back by his family and numerous friends. Dr Compton has given him a handsome bonus and he may stay on at the Ranch until the end of June. We all hope that he will be very careful in future and not overdo his strength. We do not yet know his plans for the future and presume they are not definitely fixed. I should have liked to have attended the Vryburg show this week but a way has not opened in that direction this year.

Grace writes that the local Building Society has passed their plans for adding another room and generally altering their house which no doubt will add to their comfort considerably. I wish they could strike a bigger supply of water. I hope the installation of electric light will be included in the improvements to be added. There does not seem to be any word of a transfer coming along at present. It will be very unfortunate should it come soon after the alterations have been completed. Grace and Ted are thinking of visiting Reg and Dot but do not know if they will join in a trip to the National Park. Edith Collett will be coming to us about June 20th and after visiting Fish River relations, will go to Joe and Blodwen. She has asked for Grace's address so that she might see them at the station as she comes south. We did not get any news from Joe and Blodwen this week. No doubt they are busy entertaining Mrs Price and Etta. We hope they have secured a suitable servant by now. Very likely we shall get letters today.

Dot writes that they have their motor and are enjoying trips into the country. Their winters are much milder than ours. We are looking forward to seeing them before long. It was Norman's birthday last Sunday. I hope some of you remember the little chap.

Ruth writes that Denis has gone off bravely as a boarder to Kingswood and will be glad if Uncles and Aunts would write to him direct from time to time. Of course she misses him a great deal but has the satisfaction of being able to see him twice a week or so.

At last I have been able to get off the photographs that were taken at Xmas. I sent a framed copy to each of you and hope they arrived safely. It is unfortunate that some of the small snaps were not better but all the same it gives a fair representation of the family as it was then. Of course it would have been nicer had it been possible for the family to have been complete. I am sorry I have taken so long about it but the long winter evenings are giving me more time for getting things done.

We had our first fire in the dining room on Jubilee Day (6th inst.). We find the back rooms decidedly cold and so we have a fire there sometimes during the day for Mom's special benefit. Yesterday I found a man who has fixed up a fireplace for us in the lounge. We have utilised the chimney which existed in Aunt Letty's old drawing room and have so saved having to build a chimney in our room. I bought a fireplace and mantle board from the man who is breaking down the old school buildings opposite for 15/- complete and it is a nice piece of furniture. We hope to have a fire in this room tonight. One day I will try to describe the arrangement of the room as I did the bedroom. We have made teak kerbings for each fireplace instead of ordinary brass ones.

We are finding the house very cold in winter and frequently have to put the electric heater on during the day. We are getting some benefit from having direct sunshine into the lounge first thing in the morning since the old school building has been removed. The sun does not rise now until about 7.30. We generally have the electric light on at breakfast time in the dining room.

We had a very short visit from Jamie and Hilda and their three children. They arrived at Ernest's just as we closed our morning meeting. They came by car from Louisvale last week and visited Aunt Lettie at Graaff Reinet en route. They were held up at Murraysburg for 48 hours on account of swollen rivers and had somewhat similar experience in coming from Port Elizabeth

where he had gone to trade in his old car for a new Ford. It took them several hours to do the few miles between PE and Grahamstown which they reached late on Saturday night. They covered the 1115 miles between Grahamstown and Cradock in four hours. Like the rest of the Louisvale family, they were in a cast iron hurry to get back. We only had time to show them over the flat etc but they could not stop for a cup of tea. They are all looking very well and Jamie says he has not had any further trouble with his ear. He said that he thought Douglas was looking very ill when he saw him at Vryburg. He tells me that the road from Vryburg to Upington is quite good for motoring so I am thinking that if we carry out our suggestion of going to Vryburg after visiting Dot, we might also go on to Louisvale and do Graaff Reinet on the way back.

Later. Aunt Jessie and Enid came in today instead of Friday as that is a holiday. They tell us that Uncle Joe Maskell is lying unconscious at the farm and that the doctor says he is suffering from a clot of blood somewhere. We are very sorry for Aunt Rosa and the family. They were here at the show in March. Willie Saunders is also on the sick list suffering from a heart attack. He is better according to the latest reports.

We are sorry to hear that Aunt Emmie has had a sudden attack of gout. It appears that she had to have assistance when getting out of a tram and had to hold on to the railings of a nearby house, the pain was so intense. She was not able to put on her shoe or put her foot to the ground, the pain was so severe. Latest reports say she is rather better.

We have started doing our own washing on the premises. I got a washing machine made like Aunt Eliza's and it is working quite well. The boy's wife comes and does the needful.

We have not had any rain for some days now and the weather today is just lovely. Most of the foregoing I have typed before breakfast and as it is so fine, I want to take Mom out for a spin before it gets too cold.

Next week I shall probably have to post on Tuesday as owing to the two days holiday coming next to each other, all the posts will be disorganised.

Letters from Grace and Blodwen this morning but for which many thanks.

We shall be going to the Fish River fete next week. Probably we shall go out on Wednesday afternoon so as to give a hand getting things ready the afternoon before.

Enid was presented with an eiderdown quilt etc by the Fish River tennis club last week. We are giving her an evening probably next Monday or Wednesday. She

My machine is not working properly so I will stop.

Much love to all

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
As May 29th, 1933

My Dear All,

I am typing on Thursday as owing to the two days public holidays this week, the post most likely will all be upset.

Let my first item of news be the congratulations to Joe on his passing his bilingual examination. We sent him a wire in appropriate Afrikaans on receipt of the news. Now that he has passed this, the first rung of the ladder of promotion, we hope that he will not be long in reaching higher stages in the service. We shall look to hear of his being appointed foreman or head of his department in due course. We are very sorry to hear that he has been experiencing some severe weather and on Saturday last, we had a fire going all day in our lounge. It is very nice now that we have the fireplace in this room. We shall not use the dining room very much now as that is the coldest room in the flat in the winter. I bought a very nice striking clock on a sale last week that just suits our mantle board. We never have had one that strikes the hours. This is a very heavy marble one and is striking in more ways than one. It has two marble ornaments alongside of it with Grecian vases on top. The local jeweller says the clock could not be purchased for less than eight or ten pounds. It keeps good time and as we lay awake sometimes, we shall be able to know the time without having to look at my watch.

Sunday was very cold and Mom would not face the elements for the evening service. The attendance was very small everywhere. I was at the coloured church and was told that only three attended the morning service and the collection amounted to one penny.

The town council has under consideration a reorganisation of the work Mary is doing in the location. They suggest that it will be better to have a hospital there for native and coloured patients. It is very apparent that most of the councillors do not know what they are talking about. Nothing is decided yet and I am glad to say that Mary is not worrying about the matter.

Douglas very kindly sent us a brace of guinea fowl last week. We have so enjoyed them. We generally have a fowl for Sundays but these were exceptionally welcome. Very many thanks again Douglas. I am sorry that there appears to have been some delay in the receipt of the box of apples I sent to each home. Ruth acknowledges the receipt of her box and I hope all the others have got theirs ere this. The framed photos of the Kroonstad and Bloemfontein gatherings at Xmas have at last been dispatched. Ruth, Douglas and Joe have acknowledged theirs. Douglas writes that he is getting on nicely, everyone says how well he is looking. He says Eric Fear is not staying up there. I expect he is back at Rooispruit by now. I wonder what he will do or where he will settle.

Grace reports that building operations have commenced. I guess they are finding it very uncomfortable in this cold weather. They will enjoy the extra comfort all in good time.

Ruth says that Milner is doing better in Bloemfontein now that his insurance firm has provided him with a car. He and May are looking to go to Grahamstown for Xmas.

Dorothy reports that Nelly McGee is engaged to a young Dutch man. I do not know his name. I expect Mrs Price and Etta are feeling the cold at Bloemfontein. They will be passing here on their way to PE when they have finished their visit to Joe and Blodwen. There has been snow at Port Elizabeth and the mountains round here are also tipped.

Uncle Joe Maskell is still unconscious. We phoned to them a few nights ago.

Mom and I look to go to Fish River fete early on Thursday morning and will take some visitors with us. We return the same day. There is nothing fresh to report re holidays. Am waiting on news from Joe re his plans.

No more this week
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
Wednesday June 12th, 1935

My Dear All,

The first important news of interest to the womenfolk is that Joyce Townshend has a son born on Sunday last. Hearty congratulations, I hope that you will write to her. Her address is 1 Woodside Road, Tamboerskloof, Cape Town.

We hear that Eric Fear has hired a farm near Schoombee. There is a school about three miles away and Freda will take all three children there and back daily. Eric still wants to go to Vryburg and may do so later on. Another item of news is that Grace and Ted and of course the children are probably at Dorothy's as I write this. Their house is being enlarged and it is as well for them to be out of the way whilst the workmen are about. We shall hope to see the completed alterations on our way back from our holiday.

Our plans are now fixed, as far as anything in this world can be called fixed, Joe's holiday commences from Monday 24th. That means he is free from Saturday afternoon. As there is no train from here on Friday morning, we are leaving on Saturday at 7.5 am and Joe will join the same train in the evening, arriving at Johannesburg early Sunday morning where we shall stay the day. I hope to attend Meeting in the morning and see a few Friends in the afternoon. If we can get away early on Monday morning, we should be in Potgietersrus the same evening. On Tuesday or Wednesday, I hope Grace, Ted, Joe and I will start for the Kruger National Park and get back to Dot's for the weekend. Of course, Dot will not have room for all of us to sleep, so the men friends will either have to go to the hotel, which is close by, or Dot may have been able to get accommodation at one of her neighbours.

Douglas has very kindly sent us another consignment of guinea fowl. They are exceedingly nice eating. We do appreciate his thoughtfulness on behalf of our creature comforts. Their plans for the immediate future are not made but we hope they will see their way to settle near congenial surroundings. We have asked if it will be convenient for us to visit them on our rounds.

Last week was a particularly busy one for me. I addressed the children in the Wilson (formerly Poor) school at 8.30 am. In the afternoon I had to speak to the WCTU on their Red Letter day. In the evening, I attended a meeting of the Toc H but had no active part to take. On Friday evening, I took the chair at the Methodist Missionary meeting and on Sunday morning I conducted the service in the Methodist church here. In the afternoon, Mom and I took a walk round the Railway camp as the day was so beautifully fine. I was glad to rest at Ernest's on the way back as I felt tired. I have no more official duties to perform before we leave next week. The weather since Sunday has been anything but nice. A very cold wind blowing and dull all day.

On Monday morning I went to the station to see Mrs Price and her daughter pass through on their way from their visit to Joe and Blodwen. They were looking very well and said they had enjoyed their visit very much. Joe and Blodwen have decided to take a house about four miles out from Bloemfontein. Shannon will be their station. The rent is only 3/10- against 6/10- they are paying at present. Unfortunately Joe will not be able to get home to his mid-day meal. We are looking forward to seeing the home on our return trip. They don't move until August 1st. I shall, of course, take my typewriter with me and shall hope to be able to send some interesting news of our travels. I am arranging for post to be forwarded from here to wherever we may be so I hope no one will omit to write. Our first address after 22nd will be c/o Mrs R J Hudson, Box 160, Potgietersrus, Transvaal. I have just completed indexing one of the minute books of the church which goes back for 27 years. It has been interesting as it has given me some insight to what has happened since we left Cradock. Must stop now, with much love to all,

Charles

53a Bree Street
Cradock
Wednesday, June 19th 1935

My Dear All,

There is hardly any need for me to write at all this week but I suppose I must for the sake of those who look forward to hearing from us and who we may not be seeing on our forthcoming holiday. I must be brief as it is a short day and the boy has not turned up again. I am trucking the car this afternoon and we leave by the early train on Saturday. Grace would like us to leave earlier than Saturday but Joe cannot alter his leave. We shall probably go as far as Pretoria on Sunday so as to get to Potgietersrus early on Monday. Ted and Grace arrived at Dot's on Wednesday and has to be at office on 1st July so there is not much time. Monday night was the coldest we have had so far. There was ice on our back stoep. The days have been very nice and hope the same conditions will continue whilst we are travelling.

Aunt Eliza paid us a visit a few days ago. The first time she has been in our flat for over two months. We took her on Monday to the cemetery as it was the 12th anniversary of Uncle James' death. Alison let us have a few roses. Flowers are very scarce now.

We have been giving away our grapefruit, and have enjoyed eating a good many ourselves. It is no use leaving them on the trees whilst we are not here.

We have not heard from Douglas if it will be convenient for us to visit them this tour but perhaps letters may come today. It seems as though there was a general move on. Joe and Blodwen have taken a house about four miles out of Bloemfontein, Grace and Ted are altering theirs, Eric Fear has moved to his hired farm near Schoombe and so it goes.

For the past six months, I have been to the local chemist, who also specialises in eye testing and he says he cannot detect any great difference in my eyesight. He also advises me to carry on as at present until they are much worse. I know they are not improving and it is increasingly difficult to read or recognise anyone unless quite close to them. My left eye is practically useless for any purpose. Of course I can write but it is another matter to see what I have written. I find it impossible to write straight or to keep to lines. However, I have much to be thankful for. I have been doing a good deal of close figure work for some days trying to get out the result of our expenses since coming to Cradock. I have to look very closely through my magnifying glass in one hand and write with the other. I have nearly finished that job. Our boy went off sick again yesterday afternoon and is away today. He has sent his wife and perhaps he may come tomorrow. We are not keeping him on whilst we are away but have told him if he is here when we return, we will take him on again if he is well enough to work. His wife does our washing here since I have had a washing machine made.

Uncle Bertie came to see us on Monday evening. Mom put our biscuit barrel on the arm of the sofa and he did not see it and knocked it off. It is now in many pieces but Mr Thomas thinks he may be able to put the major portions together. We are very sorry about it as it was part of the wedding present Uncle James and Aunt Letty gave us. Ruth and Denis write brightly but complain of the wet and cold. Mr Brown has been in bed for a time with a cold. Aunt Emmie writes that Joyce and her baby are getting on slowly. Aunt Kate and Beryl are on their way to Cape Town as Beryl has to have another operation. Uncle Joe Maskell seems to be improving but his memory is still gone.

Must stop and get on with packing up.

Love to all
Dad

Box 10
Potgietersrus
Transvaal
July 2nd, 1935

My Dear All,

I did not write at all last week as we were away in the Game Reserve. It will be difficult to recount all that has happened since then but I will do my best to give details as far as possible that may be of interest. I cannot expect to keep to actual date order but that will not matter.

The day before we left Cradock, I was asked to accept the position of Circuit Steward of the Methodist Church which had become suddenly vacant by the transfer of the occupant of the position to Port Elizabeth. Uncle James held the post for many years and perhaps I may be of some service in this direction.

Saturday morning we were astir early. We had told our boy, John, to come by 5.30 but he was there by five. We had a proper breakfast before starting for the station and everything was put away and the house left in order against our return. The train was a little late in starting but it did not delay us. Mary came to the station to see us off. There was no one at the station at Fish River as we passed, nor did we see anyone at Rosmead or Naauwpoort. I phoned from there to Dwaal to enquire how Uncle Joe Maskell was and was glad to know he was much better. Since then we have heard that his sister, Mrs Meintjes, has passed away. She was Rosa's bridesmaid at our wedding.

Our train was running in duplicate and consequently we were a little late in arriving at Bloemfontein but Joe and Blodwen and Edith were on the platform to meet us. Joe was not sure if we had booked a seat for him in our compartment so he had booked on the first portion of the train but took his chances of getting with us. We had booked for him so it was alright. I had trucked my car on the Wednesday before leaving and as we got nearer to our destination, was glad to receive a wire from the Agents saying that they would meet us at the station with the car. This saved us a good deal of trouble and after getting breakfast at a café and phoning to Friend Stuart Smith, we were soon on the road to Pretoria. It was an easy run of about 39 miles. We first called on a friend of Joe's, a Mr Speedy, who visited us in Vryburg years ago. He kindly entertained us to morning tea. I phoned to the Farrens whilst Joe and Speedy saw to a flaw which had developed. The only man available who could attend to the fault was out on another job so we had to wait for his return about two pm. It only took him a few minutes to do but it caused a delay of some hours. The sun set before we reached Potgietersrus and as we had wired the day before that we hoped to arrive about noon on Monday, they were not expecting us. As it was, we arrived about 8.30 and Grace's children had gone to bed. The recognised our hooter and all were pleased to see us. Grace and family being due back in Kroonstad for duty on July 1st, it was necessary to get a move on if we were going to do the Kruger National Park together. I was not feeling too fit after the hurry of getting away and two bad nights, but after resting most of the morning and repacking the car for the trip, we were able to get off at 2.30. The party consisted of Joe at the wheel, Grace, Ted and myself as passengers. We took a full supply of blankets etc and food calculated to last us for three or four days. We planned to be back by Friday night at the latest so that Ted and family could leave on Saturday morning. Our route lay via Pietersburg, Tzaneen. The road over the mountain was good in parts and decidedly bad in parts. The view was grand but unfortunately we started a few hours too late to see the best part of the country in daylight. We dropped about 2000 feet in ten miles. On top of the mountain, a Friend has a boarding house at Haenertsburg. I did not like passing without calling as I met her at General Meeting in Johannesburg when Uncle Joe was out here. Quite recently she lost a son who fell down a kloof at a waterfall near Pietersburg. We only had time for a few minutes standing conversation and had to press on. Her house is on top of the mountain and a difficult climb to reach the top. I am hoping way will open for me to go there again before we leave these parts. We missed the beautiful scenery from her home to Tzaneen. The country is heavily wooded and

I want to see it by daylight. We slept at the hotel in Tzaneen and were glad to have a hot bath and comfortable beds.

We were off after breakfast for the Reserve proper. We entered the Reserve at Malelane Gate where we stopped for a while and ate our lunch. We had to pay an entrance fee of £1 for the car and four passengers. Joe was carrying a small revolver which had to be sealed and only could be used in case of self defence. We had no occasion to break the seal. Let me say for the benefit of those who may not have the opportunity of visiting the Reserve, that whilst there are certain recognised ports of entry, the Reserve is not fenced in except at the gates. The Reserve covers an area of 8000 (eight thousand) square miles. No fence could be constructed that would keep in the game. Elephants etc would be always breaking through. The northern and central entrances are not so well watered as the southern, consequently there is not so much game to be seen in these parts. The Government is sinking a borehole near the gate where we entered and it is expected that when this is finished and successful, more game will be attracted to these parts. Elephants are supposed to be seen in this area but we were not fortunate enough to see any in any part of the Reserve. We saw large numbers of impala all over the Reserve. These are very tame and are larger than springboks. They are very graceful animals and seldom attempt to run away when a car comes along. We also saw zebras but not in larger numbers. They were not very shy but generally grazed about with other animals. I think the giraffes interested us most of all. Their long necks and stately walk make them very interesting to watch. Waterbuck, kudus and other antelopes are all wonderfully protected by their colours and markings. They seem instinctively to stand in the shade of trees that resemble their colours etc. We only saw one hippo. He was only half covered by the water in which he was standing. He did not move an inch all the time we were watching him. This was in the southern part of the Reserve. We only saw one leopard all the way. He was more timid than any of the animals we saw and soon slunk away in the grass. On the last day we were in the Reserve, we were fortunate enough to see a small lot of lions. They were lying in the grass about 150 yards from the road. When we arrived at the spot, three other cars had stopped to see them. I do not think we should have noticed them as they were so far away and were lying in the grass. There was evidently some cubs with them but they took no notice of any of the cars. I took my field glasses with me, otherwise I should not have seen as much as I did. Of course all the others spotted the animals before I did. It is estimated that there are at least two thousand lions in the reserve. Owing to the long grass and thick bush, it is very difficult to see them. At this time of the year the grass is practically the same colour as their skins. So unless they are close to the road (as they often are) you may travel all through the Reserve without seeing any of them. They take no notice of cars but sometimes young ones have been known to come and smell around a car and even rub up against it. That was not our experience. On the whole we were rather disappointed that we did not see more game. We must have seen hundreds if not thousands of impala. Some of the visitors we met reported having seen from 20 upwards of lions. We should have liked to have seen more.

The roads through the Reserve for the most part were good. In many places they are wide and well made, in others they will only admit of one car without having to turn out off the road in passing. The country is well wooded. There are many large trees but the majority of the country is bush. In many parts one cannot see more than 150 yards or so on either side of the road so one can imagine what quantity of game there must be hidden in the deeper parts of the Reserve. In some parts there has been a clearance of bush and picnic spots are arranged at some of these. There must be thousands and thousands of tons of dead wood in the Reserve. If this could be collected and sold or given to the poor, it would supply a much felt want.

Some of the roads in the southern sector have very deep dongas. These need very careful negotiating and might, with advantage, be improved.

The accommodation at the Rest Camps is excellent. Of course it must be remembered that everything is done in picnic style but the arrangements are quite sufficient and the service is satisfactory. The camps are picturesque and conveniently arranged. At the three we visited and slept in, there were rondavels, tents and bungalows. Some of the rondavels were twenty feet

diameter, some with, and others without, centre poles. The walls are built in concrete about six feet high and well thatched. Each has concrete walls and is furnished with simple bedsteads (at one place we had iron bedsteads), tables and benches to sit upon. Washstand and hurricane lamps are also provided. Water is laid on and camp fires are looked after by the native staff. At the places we stopped at, there were stores with abundant supplies of all sorts of tinned provisions at quite reasonable prices. I should have mentioned that there were tents capable of accommodating three or four. The camps are kept very clean and there were hot and cold baths in some of the camps. The camps are fenced off and the gates closed half an hour after sunset.

We had an experience the last night we were in the Reserve. We were pressed for time in order to avoid being fined for being late when we overtook a car which was held up for want of petrol. We helped them with what reserve we had and this took them another eight miles nearer camp. This time we had to siphon some more petrol out of our tank and so enabled them to reach camp. The Officer in charge kindly accepted the explanation for the cause of the lateness and waived the claim of a fine. In addition to the owner was his wife and two young children and a friend. The children were sickening for whooping cough. It was fortunate that we were able to help them as during the early hours of the following morning, we were all awakened by the roar of a lion nearby. Had the party been obliged to sleep in their car in the veldt for the night, I guess they would have been very frightened.

We had to cross two rivers on pontoons. These are worked by natives and a charge of three shillings is made for each crossing. Books of coupons valued at 22/- are sold for 20/- and are very useful. Mattresses are hired at sixpence each per night at the rest camps. Blankets and sheets can also be hired.

I have previously mentioned some of the more important animals seen but forgot to mention the warthogs. These are large ugly creatures and generally made off as soon as seen. Wild turkeys were in evidence but all the time we were in the Reserve and outside of it, so far as that goes, we have not seen a hare or spring hare.

We spent practically four days in the Reserve and covered in all 740 miles. The last day we did 285 back to Potgietersrus arriving about 8 pm. We took a different road back after leaving Tzaneen. This took us through Duiwelskloof and Munnik. The scenery was very beautiful. Millions of trees have been planted on the sides of the hills. There are also large flower gardens. Fields of carnations grow to perfection and are sent to Johannesburg and other markets. Ted's half Uncle is Bank Manager at Duiwelskloof and as he had not seen him for about thirty years, he gave him a surprise. Removing his dentures and with only his lumber coat and trousers on, he asked him if he did not know him. When he said his name was Irons, of course the joke was out.

We covered 285 miles the last day of our trip. On the way back we called for a few minutes on Mr and Mrs Organ at Pietersburg, about 38 miles from here. They are old friends of ours from Vryburg and Mrs is sister of Mr Bevan Wookey, who I used to visit at Cape Town.

We men had made up our minds that we would not shave all the time we were away. You can imagine what we looked like when we got back. Everyone was pleased to see us safe and sound.

Grace got carsick one afternoon but after a good night's rest, was fit again. Most nights we went to bed as soon after supper as possible. Once we were in bed by seven.

Of course there is much more that could be said but I think I have told you the most important items of news.

We were sorry that Grace, Ted and Family have to return the next day to Kroonstad so as to allow Ted to be at work on Monday morning. They left by their own car about 10.30 and we had a wire to say they slept at Vereeniging and got home safely at 10.30 on Sunday morning. They are very disappointed that the builders had not finished with the house and so they have had to fix up arrangements with neighbours to board them for a fortnight or so.

On Tuesday afternoon we received a wire from Douglas saying that he was bringing all the family over by car the next day and asking us to arrange accommodation for them. We tried

to persuade Joe to stay over but as the Workshops were working overtime, he felt that it would not be right to take any additional time off. Of course he would have liked to have stayed and met the rest of the family. He left by the 11 pm train and no doubt he is safely home by now. One afternoon he motored Mom and I to the Zaaikraal tin mines, about 15 miles from here. We got there a few minutes before four and were disappointed not to be able to see over the workings as they knocked off work for the day at four. We may go again whilst Douglas is here.

Douglas and family arrived about 7.30 on Wednesday evening, having covered the distance from Scholtzfontein to here in just twelve hours. The mileage was over 440, or an average of 38 per hour, including stoppages. Some going. Reg was just going out of his gate in order to see if he could see them and escort them into town, as it was dark. They just met at the gate of the house, they were all very tired as you can imagine. The children have nasty coughs but are otherwise well. Douglas is looking to start for the Game Reserve on Sunday and the children are excited at the prospect of seeing some lions. It has been exceedingly nice having them here and they all get on well together.

Saturday 6th. We went to see the Zebeda Fruit (Citrus) Estate yesterday afternoon. Dot was not able to come with us as Allan was not very well. We took both cars and picnicked along the road. We saw millions of orange trees but the grading and packing business is finished for this season so missed seeing this. I am told that this estate is the largest citrus one in the world. We covered just seventy miles in all. Whilst Joe was with us, Reg took us over a tobacco factory in town. Here they receive supplies from the farmers and dry and cure the leaves, sorting them into about thirty different grades. After they have been stacked in order to ferment, they are treated through heated chambers to be dried before packing. Each bale of dried leaf is worth about £250.

I must not stop to write more this week and am afraid that you will be tired of reading all that I have written. I have done so that you too may be interested in our doings. Our plans for the immediate future are in the air. We shall not be going to Vryburg as Douglas and Co are here. They go back via Johannesburg and take the children to Kimberley by 15th.

Hoping you are all well and that we shall hear good news of you all,

Yours as ever,

Dad



Charles Butler's CAT Cradock car



Charles & Ted at Game Reserve

P O Box 10
Potgietersrus
July 13th, 1935

My Dear All,

It is three weeks today since we left Cradock and I have only posted one circle letter. I feel quite ashamed of myself but being on holiday, we have not been doing anything worth recording. I am sure you all will be sorry to hear that Grace has met with an accident, which might have been more serious than it was. It appears that in her anxiety to help on the task of getting the house alterations advanced, she climbed on to the table and then on to half a drum to do some of the colour washing of the walls. She lost her balance and fell heavily hurting her hip etc. She was unconscious for four hours. The neighbour phoned for a doctor and Ted was soon on the spot. We have heard since and she does not seem any the worse. The house is expected to be ready for occupation in the course of another week or so.

We were looking to start on our homeward track in the course of another week or so. This is now likely to be altered as yesterday afternoon, Reg had a reply-paid wire from his brother, Leslie, asking if he and his family could come for a fortnight as the doctor had ordered him away for a change. We understand he is suffering from stomach trouble. They do not know exactly when to expect them but probably some time next week. Under these circumstances, we shall probably stay until they arrive and then leave the next day for Kroonstad where we shall only stay a day or so just to see the family and the alterations. Mom and I would then also spend a day or so with Joe and Blodwen so as to see their prospective home at Shannon and then leave by the evening train for Cradock. Dot and the two boys would in that case not break their journey on her way down but would on her way home again. She would most likely go back with Leslie and Co as far as Johannesburg and come right through to us at Cradock. This will enable us to entertain Edith before Dot arrives as it would be more convenient than having them both at the same time. Under these circumstances, we may be back in our flat in a week or two.

We are having a very nice time here, quiet and restful and interesting. One morning we went to one of the Amms in the country for morning tea, which seems to be a feature of the social life of the community. A social was also to be held in their new hall adjoining the new church. They only have fortnightly services but as I am here, they have asked me to conduct a service tomorrow evening. The regular Minister, a Mr Robinson, was educated at Friends school at Penrith as were also his brother and sister.

We have not heard a word from Douglas and family since they left. We expect they are at Evelyn's sister (Mrs Ambler's) today. They were intending going from there to Kimberly with the three children for school which opens again on Monday next.

We have both found quite a number of little jobs to do about the house and it has been a pleasure to do them. Mom has been sewing for Dot. One evening we spent at the Gilberts and listened in but the reception was not good. The Gilberts are old friends from Vryburg. Her father was the Congregational Minister there. Her sister used to be in my office in Vryburg. She is now married and left for England by yesterday's mail boat for a holiday in England with her husband, Mr Jennings.

We have had very nice weather since we have been here. Some nights have been very cold but the days have been warm. The Municipality has today laid the mains into the erf here for the town's water supply. It is expected to be finished in another month or so.

We have not heard from Joe and Blodwen this week. Expect they are busy getting ready to move.

Much love to all,
Dad

Box 10
Potgietersrus
July 16th, 1935

My Dear All,

Our holiday is drawing to a close. We have been in these parts for over three weeks and have enjoyed the visit very much. It has been very nice having seen Douglas and his family, Grace and her family and Joe. It would have been nice if Ruth and Denis and Blodwen and her two hopefuls could also have been with us. It has been a big undertaking for Reg and Dot to cater for all and sundry but she has done us all splendidly. We are very grateful to her and Reg for all that they have done.

You will all be sorry to hear that Mr Jack Brown passed away on Monday morning last. Ruth wired the news and we of course replied. We wonder if this will mean any changes for Mrs Brown and Ruth. No doubt we shall hear in due course.

We had a few lines from Evelyn saying they had enjoyed their trip through the Reserve and saw a number of lions and other animals. They wrote from Brandfort (Amblers) and had spent some time with Grace and family and were going to see Joe and Blodwen on their way to Kimberley.

Mary has written wanting me to be back in Cradock next week in order to meet Mr Sutherland but it is doubtful if I shall be there in time. We were thinking of leaving here on Thursday morning and Johannesburg, Friday, and spending a day or so at Kroonstad and Bloemfontein on the way down. Now Reg's brother and family are arriving here on Saturday afternoon by car from Vryburg and they want us to stay till then and leave on Monday for the south. In that case we shall catch Tuesday's train for Kroonstad arriving the same afternoon. Our movements from there will have to be decided later but we do not intend spending more than one night or so at either place. If there is any alterations in our plans, will let you know by wire. We are trying to pay a visit to Friend Garthorn tomorrow so that Mom can see some of the beautiful country in those parts.

Joe has sent us some snaps taken in the Reserve by him. Will show them to you as we see you.

Blodwen writes that her sister has had a bad time with the arrival of her second child. Fortunately her Mother and sister were with her.

The weather has been quite summery here for some time, yet we have a fire most evenings.

You had better address to 13 Beck Street, Bloemfontein if necessary.

We are glad to know that Grace is none the worse for her fall of last week. Harold was not well when she last wrote.

Probably I shall not write again before we get back to Cradock.

Excuse brevity as I am writing in order to catch this post. We are all well and looking forward to seeing you soon.

Dorothy will come to us after the visit of her brother and sister-in-law. She will not break her journey on the way down but looks to do so on the return.

Much love to all,

Dad

Kroonstad
July 23rd, 1935

My Dear All,

I do not know exactly where I left off in my last letter but a great deal has been happening lately that I feel that unless I begin now, I shall not be able to catch up with the news when we get back to Cradock. I know that I cannot record our various movements in proper order but that does not matter very much. I think I recorded the departure of Douglas, Evelyn and children for the Reserve. It was a great and unexpected pleasure to have them with us at Potgietersrus from Wednesday evening to the following Sunday morning. We have since heard that they had a very nice time in the Reserve and did not stay as long as we did. They saw more lions than we did and they travelled a good deal further. They returned via Barberton Johannesburg, Kroonstad, Bloemfontein and Brandfort and then onto Kimberley where they left Arthur, Lynne and Rex at boarding school. We have not heard from them since. We gather that their immediate plans are for Evelyn to stay in Vryburg for some months with the younger children whilst Douglas builds a suitable house on his farm. It is practically settled that the three elder children will be coming to us for the October holidays. We are looking forward to their visit with a great deal of pleasure.

Our last few days in Potgietersrus were pretty busy ones. When we knew that Reg's brother and family would not be arriving until the end of the week, we decided to take Mom over part of the route that we had travelled to the Reserve. Reg was able to take the Wednesday morning off so we started early in his car and had breakfast along the road before we reached Pietersburg. Of course, Dot and the two boys were with us. At Pietersburg, we changed over into another car which Reg had been offered to trade with his. It was a very nice one but proved extravagant on petrol and after the day's run, it worked out that it used about twelve to fourteen miles to the gallon. It took all the hills which we had done in second or low gear in top gear which made it easy travelling. At Haenertsburg, we stopped to see Mrs Garthorn for morning tea as we had only had a few words with her on our former visit. She is running the place as a holiday resort and says she has had quite a number of visitors this season. The house she is occupying is the old Residency and is very beautiful for situation. There are many beautiful walks all about the place and I can see that anyone wanting a quiet restful holiday could easily spend it there. The village only consists of fourteen houses, a post office and store etc. They have a telephone service to the village but not to her house. The scenery is charming and reminded me very much of Devonshire. She is too far from Pretoria or Johannesburg to attend meeting but is very interested in the Society. I was glad to have the opportunity of seeing her. We enjoyed our morning tea on the lawn (1/- each). We learned that the Postmistress is a Miss Collett, daughter of a Graaff Reinets Collett. I wanted to stay and make enquiries as to the relationship but we were pressed for time so will write to her later and find out.

When we passed this way before, it became dark shortly after starting. This was an additional reason for wishing to see this part of the country. To adequately describe this part of the country requires a more able pen than mine. The road falls about two thousand feet in ten miles. It winds in and out between the hills and valleys in a most enticing manner. At one point, we looked down over hundreds of feet of precipitous hills and traced the winding road for miles and miles. The hills are heavily wooded with wattle and gum trees, the country being under the control of the Government Forestry Department.

In many places indigenous trees are left and in open spaces, where grass grows, it was being burnt off in order that the new young grass comes on early. Looking down from the hilltops on all this mass of trees and greenery, with its winding strip of white road, is a sight to behold rather than attempt to describe. In some places an added beauty was to be found in little streams of water at the side of the road. I could not help wondering what we had missed on our first trip. We were devoutly thankful for the way Joe had driven my car over this road. A single wrong turn or error of judgement might have had very serious results. When we nearly reached

the bottom, we turned off into a side road and stopped beside a beautiful stream for our mid-day meal. This we enjoyed under the shade of trees and rested a while. Unfortunately the winding and twisting road, and the frequent light and shade caused by the shadows of the trees across the road, caused Mom to feel carsick. This caused us to alter our plans somewhat and instead of proceeding to Tzaneen, we returned via the Woodbush Road. If it was difficult to describe the Haenertsburg-Magoebaskloof Road, it is far more difficult to give any adequate description of the Woodbush road. The engineers who were responsible for its construction have accomplished a wonderful task. For twists and turns, hairpin bends and wonderful climbs, I think it would be difficult to find in any part of the country.

There are more waterfalls along this route than the other. We walked to see one of the largest falls but time would not allow us to get to the actual spot. We were near enough, however, to see its beauty. Another, alongside of the road, was also very pretty. At some parts of the road, we were completely in deep shadows behind masses of trees and in the shade of the mountains. In another moment we were in the sunshine again and so it went for miles and miles. Reg and Dot had been along this road before and so knew the way. The road joined the Haenertsburg road again but we did not stop anywhere as by this time the sun had set and as the lights on the car were not in good order, we had no time to spare. Not only so but by this time, Mom was feeling more miserable than ever. It was past eight when we got to Pietersburg where we again changed cars and returned in Reg's to Potgietersrus. Reg decided not to consider trading in the new car as it only did about twelve to fourteen miles to the gallon. The children were very good. Allen had two sleeps during the day. He was as lively as a cricket on the return trip but at last dropped off to sleep and they were both put to bed as they were.

Bloemfontein, Wednesday. We had intended starting on our return to Cradock the day after we returned from our trip but as Mom needed a rest, we put it off for a day and left Potgietersrus on Friday after breakfast.

Cradock, July 28th. I must try to finish this rambling letter today, otherwise it will not be of much interest to anyone as it will be so old.

The journey from Potgietersrus to Pretoria was more difficult than I expected. I had taken every precaution to have the car examined so as to avoid any possibility of anything going wrong, especially as Reg had expressed the opinion that the clutch was slipping. The garage assured me that it was quite in order. Just as we got to Nylstroom, not quite half way to Pretoria (about 60 miles run), the clutch slipped so badly that we were not able to mount the incline into the village. Fortunately there was a garage within a few yards of where we stuck, so we were able to get the defect easily remedied. One of the men who attended to the job recognised my SOE button. I took the opportunity of phoning to Alex Henderson from here and told him I hoped to reach Pretoria by about four pm. This was about noon.

(I find that I did not take sufficient thin paper with me so had to use ordinary letter paper for the two previous sheets. Consequently some of the copies may not be as distinct as I should wish. Now that I am writing from home again, I hope there will not be any further difficulty.)

In order to assure myself that the car was alright, I stopped at the next town, Warmbaths, and asked the garage man to examine the clutch. He assured me that it would take me as far as Pretoria as the country was quite flat but he doubted if it would manage the hills between Pretoria and Johannesburg. The car behaved splendidly all the way to Pretoria, which we reached at 4.39, about 80 miles from Nylstroom, about 150 from Potgietersrus. We called on Friend Henderson before going to any hotel and he had made enquiries at the Residence Hotel for us. We were exceedingly comfortable there and found the charges quite moderate. (If any of you have occasion to go to Pretoria, I should recommend your staying there.) I arranged for a garage to examine the car first thing in the morning but it being Saturday, and the weekly half holiday, they said they could not renew the worn part in the time at their disposal. This was exceedingly awkward as I had arranged to truck the car back to Cradock on Saturday morning from Johannesburg. There was no alternative but to phone Johannesburg and get authority from the Railway to truck the car from Pretoria. After a lot of worry and additional expense, this was

arranged. I had to leave the car with a local garage to do the needful trucking on Monday as by this time it was too late to do it before 1pm. It was a very worrying morning for me going from one office to another and phoning to the various officials concerned. I left Mom at the hotel whilst all this was being arranged. However, we managed to catch the 1.25 pm train for Johannesburg and ate some sandwiches on the way. It was a slow train and consequently a wearisome journey. We took our luggage to the Queens Hotel, being the only one who had a Runner on the platform. Our first concern was to get possession of our return tickets which were held by the Railway against the re-trucking of the car. I had arranged for them to be left at a certain garage and was relieved to find that they were there. The only person we saw whom we knew was one of the lads who used to stay at Louis Botha House with us. We were pleased to see him and he us. At the hotel, we had asked for a quiet room as we were both very tired. The hotel was next to one of the largest bioscopes in Johannesburg. We noticed from our window that there was an iron staircase, which we took to be an emergency fire escape. To our surprise, at 8.40 pm, we heard the clatter of many feet coming down the stairs. We had gone to bed at 8. This we found was an exit from the adjoining bioscope. At 11.40 pm the noise was repeated. They evidently have two evening sessions at the bio. Cats further disturbed our sleep. I do not recommend the Queens Hotel.

We were glad to get into the train at 11 am for Kroonstad. Amongst the many things for which we are thankful is the fact that we are not compelled to live Johannesburg. I should have mentioned that we invited Alex Henderson to spend the evening with us at Pretoria but as he had accepted an invitation to dinner, a very rare occurrence, he says, he was only able to come after eight pm. He has not left Friends as was reported from Cape Town some time ago but apparently he does not often attend. He is opposed to the holding of Reading evenings during the week as there are so few friends in Pretoria and they are often engaged.

Our journey to Kroonstad was uneventful except for the presence of a woman with two children in our compartment who spent most of the time smoking cigarettes. She was very impatient with her boy and girl because they could not sit still enough to please her (they were only three and five years old). She accidentally let some of her cigarette ash fall on the little girl's neck and punished her because she cried with pain. Some women ought not to be mothers. I had phoned on Saturday evening to Grace and Ted to meet us at 4.30. The whole family was at the station and we were soon at Tynwold.

We were thankful to find that Grace was apparently none the worse for her recent fall. It appears that she was standing on top of a half a metal drum on the kitchen table colour-washing the upper part of one of the rooms. She fell unconscious. The workmen who were doing the building heard the fall and sent the children to a neighbour's for help. Mrs van der Walt came at once and brought some brandy with her. Grace was crying and could not give any account of what had happened. It happened just as Ted was due home for dinner. They phoned for the doctor and removed her to Mrs van der Walt's house. Except for bruises, she does not seem any the worse but she will not attempt doing the same thing again. The new rooms are not yet finished internally. The men are plastering the outside walls and Grace and Ted are doing all the internal work. They have papered most of the rooms and when completed, will be very nice and comfortable. The alterations now give them three bedrooms, a lounge, dining room, kitchen, pantry, bathroom and storeroom, all under one roof. We should have liked to stay longer and helped arrange the furniture etc but as I was wanted back in Cradock for the 26th, we had to hurry on. We went to church in the evening and listened to a good address from the President Elect of the Methodist Church and had the pleasure of meeting Rev and Mrs Jennings, formerly of Vryburg. Mr Jennings entertained Uncle Joe to dinner when in London last year. We saw these people again the next day and had much to talk about as we knew them so well in Vryburg days. Mr Jennings has now retired but may take up a temporary ministerial appointment elsewhere. We travelled with their married daughter as far as Kroonstad. She has just lost her first baby twelve days old.

We left Kroonstad on Tuesday afternoon and arrived at Bloemfontein the same evening. Joe met us and we spent one night with them. Blodwen had a nasty cold, otherwise all appeared well. Of course we went to see their new home at Shannon. This is a detached house with others nearby, has two bedrooms, dining room, pantry and kitchen. There is an outbuilding and some trees and plenty of ground for Joe's poultry. Their address from now will be simply PO Shannon, OFS. I hope they will be very happy and comfortable there. There is no electric light there, neither has Grace at Kroonstad. So far as that goes, none of the children have that convenience. We called on Mrs Cloete, who lived at Observatory for some time. She seems to be in perfect health now. She was very ill before. Joe and Blodwen were going to move yesterday. We should have been glad to be of some service in helping move and getting straight but had to leave by the evening train for home.

Alison had kindly invited us to have breakfast at the Poplars which we did. We were sorry to find her suffering from flu. In fact, she has been more or less laid up all the week. Our boy was at the station to meet us and we were soon settled in as though we had not been away. Everything was as we left it just five weeks earlier.

Friend George Sutherland, for whose meeting I returned sooner than intended, arrived on Thursday evening. I spent most of Friday in showing him round and calling on various people, including morning tea with Mr and Mrs Metcalf. The evening meeting was voted a success. The supper room was filled with an attentive audience and I hope the interests of the peace movement were advanced. Our car arrived on Friday and was soon put into commission. We are hoping that Dot and her two boys will be well on their way to us by this time next week. Tomorrow we are expecting Nurse Edith Collett to be with us for a while.

We had meeting this morning at Mary's. Nine were present. Alison is better but not about yet. I must not attempt another sheet as I am sure you all will be tired of reading what I have written. Please excuse all mistakes. Some of the letter has been written with children round me and others whilst conversations have been in progress. I find it increasingly difficult to see letters on the keyboard and am intending to consult Mr Metcalfe, the eye specialist in Port Elizabeth, when I go to Uitenhage for the Synod on 9th.

Much love as usual from

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
Sunday afternoon, August 8th, 1935

My Dear All,

Since our return from Potgietersrus, I do not seem to have got into my regular system of letter writing. I think my last was posted about July 28th, since then a good deal has happened. Edith Collett arrived on Tuesday morning. Uncle Jack brought her in by car. She is very bright and always busy helping in the house in one way or another. It has been very fortunate her being here as both of us have been rather seedy.

(So far did I get on Sunday afternoon using my workshop bench as a table, as that was the warmest room in which to do anything. I was "ordered" to bed shortly afterwards and have spent a good deal of time there since.)

It is now Wednesday afternoon and I am not ready for post yet. We are both on our feet again, thanks to Edith's careful nursing etc. The weather has been dreadfully cold, severe frosts nightly. One morning there was a slight fall of snow and one morning all our taps were frozen fast. Every house is bitterly cold and the wind has evidently come from some icebergs or mountains. We are looking forward to some warmer weather. The daytime is very nice.

This afternoon, we are attending the funeral of Agnes William's mother. She died in Grahamstown mental hospital yesterday. The body was brought up by motor.

At the WCTU meeting yesterday, at which I was asked to give an address, we met a Mrs Short from Grahamstown (she has taken the duties of Secretary) and she tells me, in reply to my query, that she is related to Evelyn. Mrs Crosbie was her husband's aunt. She knew of Frank's going to Australia etc. We shall try to get to know her. I do not know her maiden name. Her husband is on the railway and was transferred from Grahamstown.

We have received snaps of the Reserve from Evelyn. They are quite interesting.

Douglas reports a good find of water where he is going to build. Evelyn is going on a visit to Brandfort shortly.

We are very disappointed that Dorothy has not been able to come to us as she fears the children are developing whooping cough. Perhaps it is as well as the weather has been so dreadfully cold at nights for travelling. We are hoping her visit will not long be delayed.

We are looking forward to Douglas' three children coming to us about September 29th.

Joe and Blodwen have settled down to their new quarters comfortably. They too complain of the cold.

Grace and Ted are also feeling the cold terribly. They have not yet got finished with the house improvements. Their servant has been sick too.

We have not heard a word from Ruth since her Father's death. No doubt she has had a great deal to see to in consequence.

I am looking to leave for Synod on Friday evening and have accepted Uncle Gervase's invitation to stay with them at Uitenhage. Mom and Edith will go to Fish River for the week that I expect to be away.

My letter must of necessity be short and very scrappy this week. I am not taking my typewriter with me as I expect to have to attend meetings all day and each evening.

We each have much to be thankful for and trust we shall continue to have good accounts from each home.

Much love to all from
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
August 21st, 1935

My Dear All

Sunday afternoon, 18th. Here we are again, back from Synod and Mom and Edith back from Fish River. It will be difficult to recount all our doings but you will be glad to hear something of what has been happening since my last letter. I have not a copy by me so do not know where I left off but that does not matter much.

Mom and Edith left on Friday afternoon for Fish River with Aunt Jessie and have spent a very nice time there. Edith stayed most of the time at Uncle Norman's, visiting Uncle Bertie and others. Mom stayed all the time at Uncle Herbert's. Aunt Jessie had not anyone staying with her. They are talking of getting a young man to help Uncle Herbert but the right person has not yet been found. They both returned to Cradock on Friday with Aunt Jessie and awaited my return the same night. I had intended returning on Friday morning but for a wonder, I had planned without consulting the railway timetable. There was no train from Port Elizabeth on Thursday evening so had to wait over for the next morning's train.

I left on 9th by train and arrived at Uitenhage about seven the next morning. I do not suppose you would be particularly interested in details of the Synod meetings so will content myself with saying they were interesting and profitable. Many of the addresses were a real spiritual uplift. It was arranged that the next Synod should meet in Cradock about August next year. Uncle Gervase and Aunt Rowena and their three daughters were very kind to me and the weather was also congenial. In fact, during the daytime, it was positively hot. The nights were cold and there was no rain. Uncle's house is very large and comfortable. They have a grass croquet lawn, an orchard, vegetable and flower gardens, garage etc. I think there are at least six bedrooms. Two ministers were also staying with them as guests and Cousin Wesley Collett had his meals with them as well as two young ladies who are weekly boarders. Uncle took me about as much as possible and I saw quite a number of old friends and made some new ones. I had never met Mr and Mrs Blunsom, although I had corresponded with them. They are Friends and related to Aunt Hetty through Mr William Blunsom who married one of Aunt's sisters. We sat next to each other at a Mayor social given in honour of the Synod. They have associated themselves with the Methodist church. They look to motor up to attend meeting here sometime. Rev Whalley, who was minister of the Methodist Church at Observatory, is in charge there and it was pleasant to renew friendships. I had dinner with them one day. I also took the opportunity of looking at some cars - new and second-hand, but have not decided on anything yet. Uncle motored some of us into Port Elizabeth one afternoon - before the meetings commenced - and we had a good look round the new pier and docks. I think it must be fully thirty years since I was in Port Elizabeth and oh what changes have taken place in that time. A new jetty and breakwater have been erected and the mail boats now come right alongside of the wharfs. It is a wonderful improvement. In the old days, the steamers had to lie out in the Bay and passengers landed in tugs. If the sea was at all rough, passengers were lowered on to the tugs in baskets. A great deal of the sea front has been reclaimed. When I was sent by the doctor to P.E. after my rheumatic fever illness, we stayed at Humewood. Today, Humewood has extended much further along the seafront and huge hotels and flats have been erected. It has greatly improved in every way.

Synod was over on Wednesday afternoon. Uncle Gervase motored us in to P.E. and I stayed with Una and Mr Shingler. They have a very nice home at Walmer and they made me very comfortable. He has a car, with wireless attached, and it was almost uncanny to listen to the news of the day whilst travelling home to dinner.

Monday evening. I must try to send Douglas a rough plan of Una's house. It is very convenient and is fitted up electrically all over. They motored me about a good deal, which was a great help to me in saving time. I tried out a few cars but the more I saw, the more difficult it is to decide which, if either, to take. You will be most interested in knowing that I visited Dr

Stewart, the eye specialist who operated on Attorney Metcalf. He examined my eyes carefully and says that the time has not come for any operation yet. He cannot say when and it may be desirable but advises me to have patience and wait. He says the left eye is practically useless so far as reading etc is concerned but I can still use it and get some vision from it. I asked him particularly about motoring and he says it is safe as long as I am careful. The eyes are not getting any better, that would be unreasonable to expect at my age. It is increasingly difficult to read newspaper print or even the lessons in service unless the lights are exceptionally good. I am very thankful for the mercies I have and trust I may continue to enjoy a measure of sight.

Whilst with Una, she received a telegram from her Mother saying her Dad was suffering from a bad attack of asthma. She was very anxious about him. She and her husband may be passing through here early next month, as he is taking a business trip visiting all his agents between here and De Aar. I have suggested that Una stays here whilst he goes on. It would be very nice if Dot could be here at the same time. Una went with me to see Mrs Howard Hemming who lives near her and is a confirmed invalid. She was very bright but is not able to walk. They manage to carry her into their car and take her for a drive now and then. Whilst there, Mrs Kissick (of Cradock) called to see the Hemmings. I paid a hurried visit to Mr Hemmings at his school for coloured boys and girls. He has done a great work here and his school interested Uncle Joe greatly when here. One evening we went to see Blodwen's mother and sisters. Mrs Price had met Una when she was staying with us at Observatory. They were all pleased to see us and remarked how well I was looking. Mrs Merrifield, who has had a very bad time with the arrival of her second child, was sitting up in bed. She is not able to do anything for her child and a trained nurse is in attendance. She gets up daily and is looking very well. She hopes to go to Cape Town at Xmas to bring back her son. The baby is getting on splendidly. Mrs Price and Etta are returning this week to Cape Town. They would like to sell the old home as they have had it done up since Mr Price's death. Mr Merrifield had had something to do with the plans of Una's house so they were interested in meeting.

We took a spin out to Humewood and what changes have taken place there. I think I have already said it must be about thirty years since I was last in Port Elizabeth but I think Humewood has improved more than any place I saw. After one of my rheumatic illnesses in Cradock, I was sent to Humewood for a month. It was here that Joe, as a baby, fell and cut his head open. Huge hotels and flats have been erected where it was only veldt when we were there last time.

I think this must end my account of my trip.

Letters from Douglas again reports the find of good water where he hopes to build his new house. He has sent us a copy of the plan. It looks a very spacious place. I want to study it a bit. Evelyn will be going on a visit to the Amblers at Brandfort. We hope she will come here also. Grace and Ted have had their children sick with the prevailing flu but seem to be better or on the mend. Joe and Blodwen are settling in nicely in their new home. Blodwen thought she was in for appendicitis but the doctor said no, for which we may all be thankful. Dot writes that the children have whooping cough but hopes to be able to come to us soon. We hope so too. Edith is going to Somerset East by train on Wednesday and goes to Fish River on Friday.

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
Wednesday, August 28th, 1935

My Dear All,

For some weeks past, I have tried to get a move on by commencing my epistle well before Wednesday, my usual posting day, but this week I have not managed to do this. I rise before seven so as to catch the early morning news service over the wireless. Of late, this has been very serious owing to the terrible unfortunate situation existing between Italy and Abyssinia. It is too terrible to think that so soon after the terrible experiences of the Great War, Italy should ever think of starting another world conflagration. She seems to fight in spite of the worldwide effort to prevent her. It is to be sincerely hoped that England will not be drawn into it. No doubt you are all following the position very closely. We must all earnestly pray that war may be averted.

A postcard from Dot received on Monday gives us to hope that she and her two boys may be with us next Monday morning. Unless I get a wire from the contrary, I look to be at the station in good time to meet them. This will be the second of our children to visit us in our home. The weather conditions are much better for travelling now than they were a few weeks ago. Yesterday was the most windy we have had but August is generally disagreeable in that respect. We hope the boys will soon shake off their coughs.

Edith went to Somerset East last Wednesday and returned by goods train the following night or rather in the afternoon. She is now at Fish River and looks to break her journey at Bloemfontein about September 7th. There is a possibility of Una paying us a visit whilst Dot is here.

Whilst at Uitenhage Synod, I met Rev Steel who was driving the car in which Ruth met with the accident just before Xmas.

I had a nice letter from the man whom we were able to help with petrol in the Reserve. I sent him a copy of the Midlands News with the account of the incident. He is a dentist at Lichtenberg and had been helped on former occasions, once in London and again in America, by YMCA men. I will send the letter round. I mentioned the incident when giving an account of the trip at a Toc H meeting. One of the audience knew the party well as a great footballer. Yesterday I received an interesting letter from Miss Kelly who used to live at Cape Town. She is now a fully trained nurse at Liverpool.

We have decided to turn our garden into a flower garden. No doubt Dot will be able to help us in this matter.

Yesterday I was nominated for a seat on the local Town Council and elected unopposed. I used to be on the council when I was here before and the experience gained at Vryburg where I was also on the council and acted as Town Clerk for several months may be of some service to the town. I have always been interested in municipal undertakings.

We are sorry to hear from Ruth that she has been laid up with flu and had to take a fortnight's sick leave. The strain of the last few months has been very severe. I wish she could come up here for a change. Denis has done remarkably well in his exams and came top of his class again out of over 40 pupils. Keep on keeping on, Denis.

We are expecting to hear what arrangements are being made for Blodwen to have a holiday. We hope there has been no further threat of an operation for appendicitis. We suppose her Mother and Sister have got back to Cape Town ere this.

We do not know if Evelyn has yet started for Brandfort but hope she will be able to come here whilst Douglas is building his new house. We are looking forward to the three elder children coming to us about this time next month. It will be nice if they come whilst Dot is here also.

We heard from Aunt Emmie that Joyce and Dudley will probably live at Somerset West for some months as Mr Townshend's Uncle has offered his house free for a year. It will mean an hour's journey by train each day daily but they think it will be worth it. We do not know if Aunt

Emmie will go with them or not. I should think it would be an excellent plan if she did, as it would be company for both of them. However we shall see. Ernest's daughter, Dorothy, who went to Cape Town to take up nursing, has had to abandon the idea as the Hospital Authorities do not consider her health good enough. She has had three months' trial and will be coming back to Cradock about the end of this month.

We called on Mrs WY Russell recently. Mr Russell was principal of the Boys' High School here for years and has retired. They are taking up their residence in town. Mrs Russell knows Aunt Emmie very well. They used to live in the Schoolhouse just opposite here which has at last been pulled down.

We had very nice letters from Mr and Mrs Gush lately. They have been admitted into the Society of Friends lately.

Later. Letters from Grace and Blodwen to hand. Both report better weather conditions and the general health of the children better. Grace finds it necessary to get more furniture now that she has additional rooms. The improvements are not all finished. Floors still have to be stained. Jean is very proud of the fact that she can skip now.

Blodwen, of course finds it lonely, especially when Joe has to work overtime. The children are very interested in a brood of chicks which have been reared in an incubator. Some bantams are carried about by them and of course, both want them at the same time. She hopes to go to Cape Town for Xmas. Joe suggests Durban.

We have not had a fire in our lounge for the past few days as the weather is decidedly warmer.

I must not write more as I have a number of little things to do before Dot and the boys arrive. There was nothing from them or Vryburg today.

Much love to all as though named,
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
September 4th, 1935

My Dear All,

I do not anticipate being able to write at much length this week, not that there is nothing to report, but there has been a lot of extra work and anxiety regarding Uncle Herbert's health. I know you will be anxious to know what has happened. Briefly this. Aunt Jessie phoned last Thursday saying she would not be coming in on Friday as Uncle Herbert was not well and would I go out and see him and bring in our usual weekly supply of eggs etc. As Ernest also wanted to go out to Grass Ridge in the hope of selling a wireless set, he arranged to motor Mom and I in his car. We left directly after dinner, Friday. Found Uncle dressed and lying down on his bed. He had had nothing to eat for a week and could not keep anything down. Even half a cream cracker was too much for him. We gave him a little carbonate of soda followed by a cup of maizena with a few drops of brandy in it. This he retained. He yielded to our persuasion to consult a specialist and the same afternoon I wrote to a Bloemfontein doctor he had been recommended to consult asking for his opinion and if necessary to make an appointment. He signed the letter. The same evening he agreed to my making an appointment by phone to see the local Dr whom he consulted the week before. I arranged for a private ward in the hospital and for a consultation the next morning. I also arranged for Uncle Norman to let one of his sons bring Uncle and Aunt Jessie in by car. I slept in the room with him. Ernest returned from Grass Ridge about ten on Saturday morning and we arrived first. As soon as Uncle arrived, he went straight to hospital and has there ever since. The two doctors had examined him and agreed that an operation would be necessary as soon as he was able to stand it. The water was drawn from him which caused him a great deal of pain. He has been kept as quiet as possible since and by the time I post this, I expect to be able to say if I am taking him to Port Elizabeth or Bloemfontein. A specialist from PE is passing through tomorrow and his Dr is trying to get him to break his journey here to see Uncle. Of course, we are doing what we can for him. We wired to Uncle Gervase on Saturday asking him to come up and stay with Aunt Jessie at the farm and he wired to say he would do so. He passed through on Monday morning so I joined the same train as far as Marlow so as to give him the latest news. I expected Dot and her two boys would be on the train from the north which crossed at Marlow. Sure enough she was there and nearly fell on her back when she opened the compartment and saw me. We were soon home and am very glad to have them with us. They seem very pleased with our little flat. They have coughs but I hope the change will do them a lot of good. They left Potgietersrus about four on Sunday morning by car and reached Johannesburg about ten. The train left at eleven and reached here a few minutes after eight on Monday morning. They saw Grace, Ted and children at Kroonstad and also Joe and Blodwen at Bloemfontein.

We had six extra to dinner on Tuesday. Edith came in with Gervase and Jack. She leaves for Bloemfontein on Saturday morning and will stay with Joe and Blodwen for a few days. She is delighted with Dot's children.

Wednesday. The specialist from P.E. has seen Uncle and it is decided that I take Uncle to P.E. on Sunday morning. You must please post as usual here and Mom will forward to me. I do not know how long I shall be away but it is probably for a couple of months. Thanks for Douglas', Evelyn's and Ted's letters to hand this morning.

There is much to be arranged so you must excuse my not writing more. I will take the typewriter with me. I have not made plans where to stay but will advise you in good time.

Much love to all,
Dad

Port Elizabeth
September 11th, 1935

My Dear All,

It is Monday evening, 9th, but I am writing this early so as to be ready for any emergency that may arise in connection with Uncle Herbert's illness.

I must retrace my steps for the past week. As you know, Dorothy arrived on Monday last and I am sorry to have had to leave her so soon. Uncle Herbert went to Cradock hospital on the Saturday previous. It has meant my going up to see him four times a day with one or two exceptions. His complaint has needed a lot of attention and I have been pleased to be able to render some service. He has had a number of visitors to see him and he has kept bright and cheerful for the most part. Uncle Gervase has been in two or three times to get instructions as to what to do on the farm. All his brothers have also been in as often as they could. On Wednesday, the local Doctor was able to intercept the Port Elizabeth specialist in these sicknesses who was on his way back from Johannesburg (where he is going to move to before the end of the year) and he examined Uncle. He said he should not unduly delay having an op, so it was decided that I should bring him to Port Elizabeth by the express on Sunday morning.

Consequently, we left Cradock at 9.40 yesterday and arrived here about 4.50. The train only stopped at Cookhouse and Alicedale. Uncle was far from well on the train and had to have some stimulants – just a little with his milk in order to stop the vomiting. He was very uncomfortable all the way. Una and her husband met us at the station. Una looked after the luggage whilst her husband motored Uncle and me to the Nursing Home. I stayed and got him to bed as quickly as possible and the Specialist came a few minutes later and decided to have the operation the next morning. He said Uncle was in a much worse condition than when he saw him on Wednesday. I am glad to say he had a good night and was prepared for the first of what may need one or more applications of the knife. They have inserted a tube to drain off the bladder and in ten days or so, they will be able to judge when the big operation of removing the prostate gland can be undertaken. If all goes well, it will probably be at least a couple of months or more before he will be able to resume his usual activities. They gave him an injection and he was back in his bed before he knew anything about what had happened. Of course he is feeling a good deal of pain now but that is only to be expected. I have left him to sleep this evening and hope he will have a good night. I am staying at Mrs Bowers, which is within five minutes of the Nursing Home and they have the phone here as well. I had to sleep at Una's last night as they had not a room available here before today. I am very comfortable here. It is an old fashioned house with old furniture. Good old fashioned English folk. They have the wireless laid on so I am able to keep in touch with the news. It has been a very miserable day, raining all the time until this evening. A strong south-east cold wind has been blowing all day. I am hoping to see Blodwen's sister and other friends but as my job at present is to look after Uncle, I am not going about much. If Uncle makes good progress, I may return in about a week's time but it is quite impossible to say at this stage. The Doctor wants me to stay as long as I can. He looks seriously on the case so far. My address therefore for the present will be c/o Mrs Bowers, Cotswold, Hallick Road, Port Elizabeth.

After the operation, I hurriedly typed and posted letters to each of the brothers and sisters so that they might know how Uncle was getting on. I shall try to do this daily. I am keep very well but get tired of walking so much. I miss the car a great deal. I hope Mom and Dot will go to Fish River this Friday and stay for a while there.

The post closes here on Wednesday afternoon. It is now Tuesday evening so I must finish off tonight. I am glad to say that Uncle is making satisfactory progress. He slept well last night after his operation. The pain is not so acute and the tube the Doctor has inserted seems to be functioning properly. The doctor was very pleased with his condition when he saw him this morning. I have been with him all the afternoon and whilst there, Denham Collett called but was not allowed to see him. Denham is of course Mom's first cousin and farms in the Graaff Reinet

district. He is down here in connection with his adopted son's illness. He is a Kingswood boy of 17 and is causing great anxiety.

On my way to town this morning. I found myself in the wrong tram but quite close to Blodwen's sister, Mrs Merrifield. So I called and enjoyed a cup of tea and moved on. I must go there again.

I have posted today two more sheets to each of Uncle's brothers and sisters giving the latest news of his progress. I did not see the doctor this morning. I had a card from Mom this morning and am glad all is well at home. If the weather keeps as it has been today, it will be very nice. I felt this morning that I could walk any distance it was such a glorious day. It has turned cold again this evening.

I took a walk through the park this morning as it is a shorter way to the trams. The park is not as good as the Bloemfontein one. This part of the town is very pretty but rather awkward to get at. The trams are rather far and there are no buses. This house is far back from the road so is nice and quiet.

Later. I have just been round to say goodnight to Uncle. He is very comfortable and says he wants to go to sleep. So that's that for tonight. I will turn in early as I have been rather late for some nights.

Wednesday morning. I did not get to bed as early as I expected. A son of Mrs Bower was telling me how they do the canning of fruit. I cannot stop to describe the details now. I have just been to the Nursing Home and Uncle has had another good night. I saw Dr and he is satisfied with his progress but emphasizes the fact that the big op is still to come and he cannot say before Monday night what the result of the tests will be. Nor can he say at this stage the nature of the op. He emphasizes the fact that it is a very serious operation and insists on my being on the spot as anything might happen.

Thanks to everybody for the nice bunch of letters which came this morning. I have read extracts from same to Uncle. There were also a number for him addressed to the hospital which I have read to him and must acknowledge.

Today is cold and wet again. The Shinglers have asked me to have dinner with them this evening and Herbert says I might take them to the pictures. We shall see later. Aunt Rowena called to see Uncle this morning. She is rather expecting Uncle Gervase to come for the weekend. Am glad to hear that Dot may be coming for the weekend and stay with Una. I will probably return with her on Monday night if she does come. I shall be glad when this weather changes.

Much love to you all
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
September 18th, 1935

My Dear All,

Here I am again at home. All the details of the past week have been recorded in a circular letter addressed to all Mom's brothers and sisters regarding Uncle Herbert's operation. It would be too much to record again here. Suffice it to say that Uncle is making fair progress after the first operation. It was thought that I might come back home for a few days before the second op, so here I am. I left him as comfortable as he could be and since my return have heard from Aunt Kate (Dudley) that he is alright.

Dot and her boys arrived on Saturday morning and Una and her husband met them. They have had a very happy weekend together. I spent a good deal of time with them but of course, could not neglect Uncle. On the Saturday I developed toothache rather badly and it got so bad by Sunday that on Monday I went to a dentist and had it out. My face had swollen considerably but after three injections, he was able to extract it. My cheek right up to my ear is still swollen and sore but I hope it will soon be better. Dot returned with me on Monday night and is talking of making tracks for Bloemfontein and Kroonstad.

We are rather in a dilemma as to what is to be done regarding Douglas' three children coming to us for the holidays which begin on 27th. Uncle's operation will be performed before the beginning of next week at the earliest and the Dr says he will not do anything without my being there. Of course Mom could go to Fish River again but I am thinking that she might as well have a change and come to P.E. with me. I should be sorry to put the children off as we and they have been looking forward to the visit for so long. Douglas says they could go to Evelyn at Brandfort. It is impossible to say how long I should have to stay with Uncle. The operation will take several weeks before he could be moved home. Under the circumstances, I feel that much as we would like to have the children, we must ask to be excused this time. We must look forward to having them another time.

You will be very sorry to hear that Ruth has had to relinquish her post as assistant librarian at Grahamstown. The doctor says she must give it up. She cannot come to us as the altitude is too high. She is going today to consult a doctor in P.E. I am sorry to miss seeing her there but we might go to P.E. via Grahamstown when we do go. We do sincerely hope she will soon be better.

Douglas writes describing a dreadful dust storm he travelled through on his way back from Brandfort. It took the paint off the car.

Grace reports having had some rain at last.

Blodwen says they are planning to go to Grace for the October weekend and Dot thinks she might as well join them.

You must continue to post here as usual until you hear to the contrary.

It is Aunt Eliza's seventy-sixth birthday today. We all went up to see her this morning. She is wonderfully well for her age and still does practically all her own work. It is Joe's birthday tomorrow. I hope you all have remembered him.

I must not write more as we are going for a walk presently.

Much love to all as though named,

Dad

Cotswold, Hallack Road
Port Elizabeth
September 26th, 1935

My Dear All,

My letter this week is late and I am sorry to say will not be very pleasant reading. As you know, when I was here last week I had to have a tooth extracted. The swelling has more or less continued and all the week I have suffered a great deal of pain. Each night I have slept with my cheek on a hot water bottle. I visited the Cradock dentist and also my doctor. The swelling has pretty well dispersed but I still have a good deal of pain.

This is comparatively insignificant to the news which I have to tell regarding Uncle Herbert. Uncle Norman and Ernest and I arrived on Wednesday morning. Uncle was looking much brighter and was feeling nicely. The operation was performed the same morning. It was not long before the Doctor came and informed us (Aunt Rowena was also with us) that it was found that he was unable to complete the operation as he found that the gland was malignant, or in plain English, there was a cancer. He was sure that had he proceeded with the operation, Uncle could not have recovered from the shock to his system. He removed part of the obstruction and has had to leave it. He will always have to wear a tube inserted in his side which will give him some relief. He thinks Uncle should last some year or two but will never be able to do any work other than supervise and give instructions to others to carry out. This has, of course, given us a nasty shock. Uncle does not yet know what has happened but is wonderfully bright and cheerful. It will be at least three or four weeks before he can be brought home again. I wrote to all the brothers and sisters and I have shown the Dr what I wrote and he says I have stated the case perfectly. I am leaving it to the Dr to inform Uncle what lies before him. I do not know that I can add more on that head at present. I shall be staying over the weekend in any case and shall probably come down again to take him home.

Ruth is also in the same hospital and had an operation on her nose two days ago. She has had a breakdown but I am glad to say she is getting on very nicely and looks to be out of hospital on Friday. She will stay in P.E. for a fortnight or so.

It has been a great disappointment to me not to be able to see more of Dot and the children and also to have had to put off the visit of Arthur, Lynne and Rex. I wired to Douglas saying the children could go to Mom at Fish River but have had no reply, so do not know what is happening.

Dr Scholtz examined me again and took my blood pressure and still says I must go easily etc.

Yesterday was a miserable day but today is brighter but still cold. I am spending as much time as possible with Uncle. Uncle Norman returns home on Saturday.

Much love to you all as though named,

Dad

Port Elizabeth
October 1st, 1936

My Dear All,

It seems as though I have been here such a long time yet in reality I have not been here quite a week yet. A good deal has happened in that time and I am afraid I cannot stop to go into all the details. Uncle's second operation took place on the Wednesday morning and Dr and I had the duty of informing him yesterday that the result was not satisfactory. He now knows the worst and has stood the ordeal very bravely. He is making up his mind to reduce his operations in farming etc to a more manageable size. This will, of course, take time and I am trying to help all I can. Uncle has had a number of visitors and I expect I shall be home by the end of this week. Uncle Bertie and Aunt Annie are coming for this week and I expect Uncle Owen will be down shortly. Dr does not want Uncle to go back to the farm for about three weeks as he has cabled for a special instrument for him. Uncle Jack and Aunt Agnes were down here for last weekend. The operation on her forehead has been quite a success.

The WCTU convention is being held here this week and I have met quite a number of old friends from Cape Town. I called at Mrs Grettons as they are next door to here. Kingsley was very interested in hearing of Joe. At the Wesleyan Church on Sunday, I met Mr and Mrs Theophilus from Vryburg. They have motored down for a holiday and look to return this week.

Ruth is staying at Mrs Atkinson's (Ruby Trollip) formerly of Vryburg. She has two children and is living a little way out of town. Her sister, Fanny, is married and living in Natal as is also her brother, who we used to call Robinson Crusoe. How time goes. She enquires after all of you children. Ruth has been offered a furnished house nearby Ruby for three months at a low rental and she is trying to get her Mother to come down. It would be so nice for Denis to spend his Xmas holidays here. I saw Miss Hornabrook at the meetings. She says her brother (Rev H) is well but is more bent than formerly.

Another piece of news I was almost forgetting to tell you. I have bought a new Vauxhall car and may motor up with it on Thursday or Friday and the man who goes with me will bring the old one down.

Mom is at Uncle Norman's according to her letter received this morning. There is to be a local preachers' convention in Cradock on Saturday and Sunday and I hope to be back for that.

Later, Tuesday evening. As Uncle Bertie and wife are coming down for the weekend, Uncle says it will be alright for me to go home. I am therefore arranging to leave either on Thursday afternoon or Friday morning. We shall not hurry as, the car being new, it will take a little while to run in. At the hospital this evening, Uncle Herbert's namesake has been admitted for an operation on his nose. He is one of Alec Collett's sons. Mom used to visit his wife when in the Cradock hospital. I am to wire the result of the operation to her tomorrow. He will probably occupy this room in a few days when he will go to the hospital twice a day as an out patient.

I am hoping for news from all of you. A lettercard came from Aunt Eliza today for which many thanks.

Uncle Herbert has suggested that I write a history of his life. He has been telling me this evening some of the journeys he has taken. When I come back for him, there may be a chance of getting on with it. Wesley Collett came to see him this afternoon. I have to do some typing for him this evening so will ring off for this week. I am looking forward to hearing from all of you as I seem rather out of the running. I hope we are going to have less wind than what we have had today.

Much love to all from
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
October 9th, 1935

My Dear All,

Here I am home again after spending over a week with Uncle Herbert in P.E. I think I gave news of him up to Wednesday of last week. On Thursday, Uncle Bertie and Aunt Annie motored down to see him. Fenner Moorcroft took them. Uncle was very jolly that evening. They returned on Saturday evening. I left by car on Friday morning with the motor salesman who drove all the way and the car behave itself perfectly. We got over thirty miles to the gallon. We came over the Zuurberg mountains, which was very beautiful scenery. I had never been there before. We stopped at Somerset East to see Mr Holden and Mr Dawes who are executors in the estate of the late Mrs Holden. It appears that the legacy which was left to Mr Jack Brown will not benefit Ruth or her Mother as Mr Brown was insolvent at the time of his death so the money will have to go to his late creditors. I was able, however, to arrange for some relief which I think will greatly relieve the situation. I need not go into the details here as the matter is still under consideration.

Uncle Gervase went down on Sunday taking Aunt Rowena and his three daughters back to Uitenhage. Uncle Owen also went down by train on Friday night and stayed there till Monday night, returning by train with Uncle Gervase. Uncle Bertie's son is there at present so Uncle Herbert will not be lonely. There are quite a number of friends who look him up from time to time. He has been able to walk (with the aid of the nurse) in the passage outside his room. I have not decided when I shall go down to fetch him home. This will depend on when a certain gadget which the Doctor has cabled for will arrive. He wants me to be there for a week or so before he can return. I am hoping to take Mom with me this time as she has had a very nasty cold for the past fortnight or so. She contracted this at Fish River. Uncle Norman brought her home on Friday morning and I arrived the same afternoon. I have tried to keep her in bed.

On Saturday afternoon we had a wire from Cousin Dora Forbes, one of Harry Collett's sisters, who lives in Burgersdorp. She came with her son-in-law to attend the local preachers' convention. She stayed with us and left early on Monday morning for Grass Ridge on their way back.

Mary and Olive called in last evening and stayed to supper whilst Uncle Dudley and his wife had dinner with us. So you will see we are not exactly lonely. Of course everyone wants to know the latest about Uncle. I was rung up before six yesterday morning to know if it was true that Uncle had died.

Douglas writes that Arthur and Rex have been spending the short holidays with him on the farm and Lynne was at the Metcalf's. We are so sorry not to have had them here but under the circumstances, it seemed impossible to fit it in. I saw very little of Dot whilst here but it seemed as though it was providential that I was able to help Uncle Herbert in some way. I have received quite a number of letters of appreciation from one and another. Dot is, I suppose, home by now. The latest news say Reg had motored to Kroonstad to fetch her.

Grace wrote recently that the house we had set our heart upon near to them at Kroonstad was to be empty shortly. Had this occurred a year ago, it is most probable that we should have been there now. It will be just a year on Friday (11th) since we arrived in Cradock. How time has flown.

Much love to you all,
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
October 15th, 1935

My Dear All,

I am writing a day earlier than usual owing to the fact that I am leaving by tonight's train for Port Elizabeth to bring back Uncle Herbert to Fish River. As you know, I have been home about ten days and as the special apparatus has arrived from England that the Dr cabled for, Uncle is naturally anxious to get back. He wired yesterday that he wanted to leave by Wednesday night's train so I am off. Personally I think he is in too much of a hurry and am trying to persuade him to have a week or so rest away from the hospital at Humewood or somewhere similar so that he can pick up his strength. However, we shall see what can be done. I was going to take Mom with me but if it is only for one day and two nights in the train, I am sure she would not enjoy it.

Neither Mom nor I have been very grand the last week. Mom came back from Fish River with a nasty cold and a wheezy chest. I got the Dr to her and kept her in bed from Thursday to Monday. She is much better now but still wheezy. I was somewhat run down and had to get a supply to make my appointment for Sunday last. We both had breakfast in bed that day and did not go out at all the whole day. It has been a very busy time in one way and another. It has also been a great time of anniversaries. The 11th was just a year since we arrived back in Cradock from Cape Town. There were no celebrations. Yesterday we observed our 44th anniversary of our wedding day. The occasion was marked by the receipt of telegrams and letters from some of the family for all good wishes – we return our sincere thanks. We truly have much to be thankful for. Today Joyce Collett chose this day for her marriage at Vryburg. The day was also unique by the fact that I attended no less than seven committee meetings, visited the dentist as I broke one of the teeth in my plate and had two consultations with Uncle Herbert's attorneys regarding some of his business affairs. Not a bad record. It is all useful work and perhaps is an answer to the question I often put to myself when we came here a year ago that I did not see any reason why we had come back to Cradock. Some of the letters I have received in connection with Uncle Herbert's illness seem to point to the fact that I may have been some use to the relations in helping him. Today, Uncle Joe would have celebrated his 83rd anniversary had he been spared.

I am glad to say that Ruth is likely to be eased of some of her burdens. A way is certainly opening in unexpected ways. We are glad to hear of Dot's safe arrival home after her holiday. Poor little Roy has burned his fingers on an iron. I hope they do not fester. Mom's burn is quite well again. Grace and Ted are greatly in need of rain. Douglas does not expect his new house to be ready for some months so the idea of spending Xmas altogether in Vryburg seems out of the question. I have no plans to suggest at present. Time is getting on. Has anyone any suggestions to make?

Miss Heathcote, who lives opposite, has been coming over for half an hour in the evenings to read to me. It is very nice of her and that, together with the wireless at 7 am and 1.10 pm and again in the evening, keeps me fairly well posted up in news of the day. We do not take any other paper than the Midland News. Mary will stay with Mom whilst I am away. If Uncle should decide to stay longer in P.E., then Mom could come down. I must not stop for more today but will let you know in due course how we get on. The weather has been very hot some days. Once it was over 90 on the stoep in the shade.

I am going to sleep out when I come back from P.E.

Much love to all from

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
October 23rd, 1935

My Dear All,

I posted to you last Tuesday just before I left for Port Elizabeth to fetch Uncle Herbert from Hospital. I was surprised to find him so much better and after an interview with the Doctor and Nurse, it was agreed that he would stay longer and leave on Sunday night, arriving at Fish River on Monday morning. Uncle was able to go about a good deal and we hired a taxi one day and spent some hours at Humewood. We had lunch there and the car called for us later and took him back to hospital. Another day we went to the snake park. As we entered, a native boy said that he recognised Uncle Herbert. It turned out that he used to work at Saltpansdrift in 1918. He was so pleased to hear about the farm and some of the hands that are still there. Uncle gave him a half a crown and the boy was delighted. Another day we went by train to see Uncle Gervase's home at Uitenhage. Aunt Rowena and the three girls were home. Uncle was very tired as it was such a hot day but after a rest and dinner, he was glad that he had gone. They motored him home to the hospital and I went by train as Una and her husband has asked to take us out for a spin. This would have been too much for Uncle, so I went with them.

We left on Sunday night and had a comfortable journey. We took a trained nurse with us for one week at least. I had to do the necessary dressings and fixing up Uncle's gadgets in the presence of the Dr and nurse at the hospital so that I can do it on the farm if necessary. I had to don the doctor's gown and he passed the work as quite satisfactory. I had arranged to have the beds etc made in advance so that Uncle was in bed before the train started. He was very anxious that we should not be late in getting up and packing etc. He stood the journey splendidly and we did not have to call the nurse all night. I went right through with him to Fish River. Uncle Gervase and Jack met us and we were soon at the farm. Uncle was glad to change into his everyday clothes and after a wash down etc, we was about much as usual. Uncle Jack motored me back to home before dinner.

Mom has not been at all well whilst I have been away. I phoned to her from P.E. asking her to come and spend the rest of the time we were staying down there but she said she was too ill to move. We wired to Fish River asking Aunt Letty to go and stay with her but she was at Katkop and as Mary was sleeping at our place and also having meals too, it was not thought necessary. She is a little better today but it seems as though she is suffering from an attack of asthma. I am getting the Dr if she is not better tomorrow. Our boy John has not turned up today which does not make it easier. He has had to dig a grave for a relative who died during the night. I am sorry to say that all the time I was away, I had a miserable cough. It is not much better but hope it will soon be. I went to Dr Lane at P.E. with Uncle as he thought he might be able to help him with his deafness. He says that no electrical instrument will help him but he is going to get another kind of thing which he says will be useful. I got him to examine my left ear as ever since I had a tooth out at P.E., it has been giving me trouble. He inserted an instrument up my nostril and then pumped air so as to clear one of the passages which he said was stopped. This had to be repeated the following day. It has given some relief (including relief of 21/-) but I do not expect it will be better until my cold leaves me.

Thanks to all for letters received since I returned. Will try to answer them individually soon. The weather has been, and still is, hot but must expect that now. Have just phoned to the farm and all is reported quite well. Uncle Herbert is away in the lands with Uncle Gervase in the car.

We are looking to go to the Rooispruit wedding on November 4th. Will try to write again before next Wednesday as there is a lot more I want to tell you all. I attended my first Town Council meeting last evening. It was quite a friendly gathering.

Much love to all,

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
October 27th, 1935

My Dear All,

As I said in my midweek letter, I would try to write again during the week. I seem to get very little time for writing as much as I would like but that is not your fault. First let me thank all of you for nice letters received during the past few weeks. There was quite a collection to answer when I returned from Fish River on Monday and others have come since.

The first piece of important news to record is the fact that after a year's negotiating, we have at last been able to secure the room adjoining our lounge as an addition to our flat at an increase of rent by one pound per month. Total £4:10:0. Had this been agreed to a year ago, we should have been able to entertain our visitors much more comfortably. I had to tell Ernest, who acts as agent for Aunt Letty, that we should have to consider getting another place if we could not get this additional accommodation. So he has made arrangements with the party next door to make some alterations to their part of the house whereby they can have additional room and we have this. I have given him a list of things I want done before we can occupy the room. These include making an entrance to the room from our passage. He hopes to get on with it at once and so do we.

This opens up possibilities for considerations re Xmas holidays. We were rather hoping that it would have been possible to have a reunion at Douglas' new home but that is out of the question this year as the house will not be ready for some months to come. Grace has suggested our going to Kroonstad as Ted cannot possibly get away at Xmas time. They are also hoping that Ted's parents may be coming to them. Joe and Blodwen have suggested our going to them. Joe is looking to take his annual leave about the 18th November so we are asking them to come here if they do not go to visit Edith and Jim Collett's farm near Ermelo. Dot, wisely, owing to heat reasons, has not suggested Potgietersrus so altogether we are rather in a quandary what to do. Mom says she would rather stay here and have as many as possible of the family with us. I concur in this. So here is an open invitation for all and sundry to come to Cradock for as long as you like. If we cannot entertain you all in our flat, there are other rooms available in close proximity to us where we can put you to sleep and we can all feed here. If you cannot all come at the same time, which I can quite see may not be convenient, come in sections.

We have been greatly disappointed in not being able to have Douglas' three eldest with us for the short holidays so we suggest that they come as soon as school breaks up. Douglas suggested the possibility of their coming next week if they go to Thera Collett's wedding at Middelburg on November 4th. Perhaps Evelyn and the younger children could stay longer than Douglas could. Then Joe and Blodwen's younger children could come about November 18h. Perhaps we could take a trip together to Port Elizabeth.

Perhaps Grace and Ted could get away about the 3rd January when the excursions cease. Of course we should very much like Ruth and Denis also to come but Ruth says the doctor will not allow her to come to this altitude. We may perhaps go and see her when the Kingswood College prize distribution takes place at the end of November. Now what about it all you folk? Time is few as the native boy said.

The past week has been trying one for Mom and me. We have both had bronchitis rather severely. I got Dr for Mom. Today we are both on the mend but our coughs in the mornings are decidedly trying.

Uncle Herbert is getting about the farm a good deal and I fear he may overdo his strength. He is quite free from pain and hope this will continue.

Your cousin, Muriel Wells, at Maritzburg, has a son born last Wednesday.

Much love to all,
Dad

53A Bree Street
Cradock
October 29th, 1935

My Dear All,

As we are looking to take a `ride out to Fish River tomorrow morning to see Uncle Herbert, and Aunt Rosa and Uncle Joe Maskell, who have come down from Dwaal to see him, I must start my circle tonight. We are having very windy and dusty weather the last few days. However, things are growing a pace in our garden. I do not know if our attempt at growing flowers is going to be a success this year but we are busy trying to lay out the grounds so as to make it look better than it was. Our grapefruit tree has been in full blossom and the plumbago hedge in front is now in flower.

The tradesmen have started today in getting the spare room ready. It is a pity Ernest was not able to arrange this for us a year ago. We have decided to take the front room for ourselves as it is a few square feet larger than our present room. They have taken off the old wallpaper which I think was the same when I used to live with James and Letty. We shall not have to buy very much in the way of additional furniture as we can use the collapsible double bed for the spare room and so relieve our lounge of that large article of furniture. I got a carpet and a few things at Vlok's sale.

You will be glad to know that Mom's cold is improving. I think I said in a previous letter that she was suffering from an attack of asthma. I should have said bronchitis. Doctor has changed her medicine which seems to have touched the spot and I hope there will not be any recurrence when she is properly better. It seems that I have taken it from her as my coughing for some days has been most distressing. It does not trouble me when I am lying still in bed but directly I get up or whilst dressing, I get spasms of coughing like I had in Cape Town last year.

Wednesday evening. Mom, Rev and Mrs Barnes and I have been out to see Uncle Herbert and we took the opportunity of presenting Uncle Herbert with xxxxx? of appreciation from the Church on his retirement from the office he has held for so many years. He quite appreciated the little service and spoke very nicely. He is walking about the farm a little and of course is motored anywhere he wants to go. Uncle Joe Maskell was wonderfully better than I expected to see him. He has always to have someone with him as he often falls. The car behaved itself very well. It took us just under the hour to do the 27 miles. Both of us are better though not free from our coughs. We all enjoyed the outing. Nurse is leaving Uncle tomorrow. Uncle Gervase is still there. We are looking forward to going to Middelburg on Monday next and will pick up Uncle Gervase and Iris at Fish River on the way up.

Grace writes that Pam has developed mumps but is back again a school. None of the others seem to be catching it. They are still hoping for rain to fill their tanks.

I have a number of other letters to write for this post so must cut you all short this week. Not really, as I posted on Sunday as well as now.

Much love to all and hoping to hear what your plans are for Xmas.

Yours affectionately,

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
November 6th, 1935

My Dear All,

First let me say that we are both much better than we were last week. We have stopped taking medicine but still cough somewhat. Mom's wheeziness has disappeared whilst I still have spasms of coughing, mostly in the mornings.

The next item of news is that the workmen are doing up the room next to the lounge and which we shall occupy as our bedroom when finished. I do not think we shall be able to move in before the early part of next week. Our present bedroom will be the spare room.

We received a wire from Douglas on Saturday saying he would be arriving at Rooispruit on Sunday evening for the wedding and would have to return on Tuesday.

Mom and I went to Fish River on Sunday afternoon. As there had been rain on Friday, we went out on the top road and called at Katkop. They were all over at Uncle Herbert's so we saw them there. There was water in Qui River but we got through without much difficulty. We slept at Uncle Herbert's and left in their car about nine on Monday for Middelburg. Uncle Gervase, Iris, Uncle Jack and his daughter, Gladys, and I filled the car. Mom would not go so stayed with Aunt Jessie. We met Douglas and Evelyn at Middelburg. They had brought Maude and Mike down and their wire arrived after they reached Rooispruit. They were disappointed Mom had not gone to the wedding so after the reception, Douglas and Evelyn motored me back to Fish River and spent the night. This added 120 miles to their trip. Douglas covered the 60 miles just in an hour and half. Some travelling. They left again at 6.30 on Tuesday morning and were to pick up Maude and Mike at 7.30 in Middelburg. They were in a great hurry to get back to Vryburg as they are leaving on Thursday for Cape Town, where they are taking Mrs Rogers for a change for a couple of months or so. They may go down again to fetch her.

We are sorry to hear that Trixie has had a breakdown and Douglas had taken her to The Amblers for a rest. She will be with Mrs Rogers at Cape Town. Douglas and Evelyn look to spend a week or so at Cape Town. Their address will be Beach Court, Beach Road, Sea Point.

The wedding was very pretty. Eric and Freda's twins made very sweet flower girls. Leslie's little girl was also a flower girl. They had the reception under the trees on the lawn. The situation was most pretty and reminded one of English scenery. In fact the minister, in proposing the health of the bride and bridegroom, remarked that Prince George could not have more pleasing environment for his wedding today. There were 35 cars at the reception, so fully 150 guests must have been present. Everything was very nicely arranged. Of course the dresses were splendid. It was very nice seeing DFE but the time was far too short.

Our next jaunt will probably be to the prize giving at Kingswood so that we can see Ruth and Denis. Uncle Norman and his wife will probably go with us.

We have not got any further with Xmas holiday plans. We have asked Douglas and Evelyn to let the three children come to us from Kimberley when school breaks up. They will let us know later on. Grace and Ted will not be able to move and Joe and Blodwen are planning to go to Edith some time this month. The latest so far as they are concerned is that they may go to Cape Town instead and come back via P.E. and Cradock. Mom does not want to go anywhere this Xmas.

Our boy was sick for a couple of days last week but is at work again now.

Dot's letter to hand today queries if they will go to Vryburg at Xmas or perhaps to Grace. I have begun to get my Xmas cards ready in time. It is quite a job addressing the crowd that I send to each year. I have not seen Aunt Eliza since I came back from the wedding. It was at her house but could not make anyone hear. I saw Eric and Freda at the wedding. They both looked very well.

I must close now and get on with the next job.

Lots of love to all
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
November 13th, 1935

My Dear All,

There is not very much to report this week but I am always sorry when any of you miss writing to us so I must set a good example by not skipping a week. You will be glad to hear, after trying to get an additional room added to our flat, we were able on Monday last (Armistice Day and also my Mother's birthday) to move into the front room and have occupied it as our room. We are very pleased with the change. We have more space and the furniture seems to fit better. I bought some carpets and rugs at Mr Vlok's sale and these have added a good deal of comfort to the room. So far we have not bought any additional furniture for what will be our spare room but will have to get an additional washstand and chest of drawers. We were hoping that Aunt Letty would be the first to occupy the room, which by the way used to be her bedroom. She is staying with Ernest at The Poplars. You will be sorry to hear that they have another case of measles there. Jeffrey is getting over his attack but now David Biggs, who has been staying there this year and is taking his matric at the Boys High School here, has caught the complaint and it is feared will prevent his sitting for his exam. Guy has been sent to the school boarding house in the hope that he will escape infection as he also is sitting for his exam. They are all looking to get away for the Xmas holidays. They have had a very trying time in one way and another. Mr Cursons was away on holiday in England for four months and has resumed his duties this month.

Uncle Herbert came to town on Friday last. He had dinner with us and afterwards the doctor examined him as one of the appliances he has to wear was not comfortable. I hope it is better now. We only had four extra to dinner that day - Aunt Letty, Jessie, Herbert and Uncle Jack, no one starved.

Those of you who remember our early days in Vryburg will be interested in hearing that Rev Heath, who was the minister of the congregational church in those days, is visiting Cradock next week in the interests of the British/Israel movement. I have been asked to preside at his meeting. I expect we shall see a good deal of him.

Yesterday was Mary's 51st birthday. Aunt Letty and us are invited to afternoon tea there today. Perhaps Aunt Eliza will also be there. At present she is having her sitting room re-colour washed and a picture rail put up.

Hope Douglas and Evelyn are having a good time in Cape Town. It is good news to hear that rain has fallen in most parts of the country. It was very awkward for Grace and Ted to be so short. Hope all their tanks are filled by now. Joe and Blodwen are at Jim Collett's at present. Edith stays there too. We have not had time to hear of their actual arrival there. We hope to go there some day.

Last week, we had some strange varieties in weather. There was a difference of 26 degrees in the maximum temperature of Friday and Saturday. I had to put on my cardigan, it was so cold. Some people had fires in their houses. Many years ago, before I came to SA, I remember Uncle James writing that they had a fall of snow here on November 11th and we had the same experience in England on the same day.

From all accounts, it seems that we are to be quite alone this Xmas so far as our family is concerned. I think we shall have to look round to see whom we can invite to come and stay with us for a holiday.

I am glad to say that both our colds seem to be getting better. We have not used the car very much as we have not been too well and Mom feels the cold so much. However now that we are on the mend, we hope to enjoy it more.

Much love from
Dad

53a Bree Street,
Cradock
November 20th, 1935

My Dear All,

So far this has been a busy week for me. On Monday, I attended SOS meetings or rather Council committees. They seem to arrange to have them all on the same day so it makes a busy time for councillors who are in business. Our mayor was recently convicted in court of taking part in business in which his firm was financially concerned. This has caused his resignation and subsequent re-election. It is possible he will not be re-elected as Mayor. Next Tuesday's meeting of the full council will determine that.

We have had another visit from Aunt Eliza who came specially to see our new room. She is very pleased with it and thinks it a great improvement on the former one. No one has yet occupied the spare room. We have not heard when the prize distribution at Kingswood is to take place. Uncle Norman and his wife have decided to go with us. We hope Ruth will be at home by then. She has been spending some time at the Tubervilles near Grahamstown and is still resting, I am glad to say.

We have not heard any news from Douglas and Evelyn since we saw them at Fish River after the wedding. Being on holiday, we can hardly expect them to write much. Grace and Ted and family are well and we hope they will be free of further infantile troubles. Some rain has fallen which makes the outlook brighter. Joe and Blodwen are still at Jim and Edith's in the Ermelo district. They are enjoying the holiday. I expect they are on their way back to Bloemfontein by now as Grace wanted them to spend a few days with them at Kroonstad. We do not know if they will consider coming to us for Xmas. Dot writes brightly about her social engagements. She seems to be the most busy of any of the family in that line.

We are trying to secure the services of Rev Jennings for six months whilst our Minister goes on six month's furlough.

Aunt Letty has not been very well at Alison's for some days. She often comes to us for dinner. She sleeps at The Poplars. They have had two cases of measles at The Poplars, both are getting better.

Uncle Herbert does not seem so well so far as we can see. He looks so white and eyes more sunken than usual. He knocks about too much to my way of thinking. The new bags that were cabled for arrived today - over 24/- in postage by air mail. I hope they will be more comfortable than the ones he is wearing at present.

Grace in her letter today says she thinks she is getting mumps. Ted has a cold but the children seem better. Hope they are all better by now. Dot sends her usual interesting letter. She tells of a fire in the rondavel at the hotel where we stayed. Glad it did not spread to their property. Xmas holidays are still in the air but nothing definite in any of the homes. We have not invited anyone to come to us yet.

The weather has been very hot lately. Often up to 95 on our veranda. The nights have been nice and cool.

Must stop as I have meetings to attend this afternoon with Rev Heath and others. The car is still doing well. Have done just on 500 miles so far.

Much love to all as though named.

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
November 27th, 1935

My Dear All,

News is scarce again this week. Grace has mumps but up to the time of writing (early morning) we have not heard how she is getting on. Ted sent a postcard to announce the fact and I can quite understand he has not had much leisure to do any writing. We hope to hear again today that she is better. They are hoping that Ted's parents may spend Xmas with them. This will be very nice if it can be so arranged.

Joe and Blodwen have had a very nice holiday at Jim Collett's. They are home again and Blodwen has written such an interesting letter telling of their doings that I am sending it on to Grace to send round for the others to see.

We have not yet heard if any of Douglas' children will be coming to us during the Xmas holidays. I can quite realise how thrilled they will be on going home to see how the new home is progressing. It will be Lynne's birthday next week. Hope she has a happy day.

Letters have since come to hand. The post does get delivered here before about 11 or even later. Wednesday is the half holiday and our boy has the afternoon off. It makes a bit of a rush to get through the post and get off our letters as well. It is nice, however, to reply promptly to letters as they come to hand.

At last night's council meeting, I was nominated for the chair but was not elected for which I am not sorry at the present state of things. Perhaps later I may be able to help in that direction if asked again.

We are not leaving until the morning for Grahamstown. We look to return either on Sunday afternoon or early Monday morning. Uncle Norman and wife do not want to be away too long. The weather has been very changeable lately, very cold at night. Rain is badly wanted. Dot mentions the severe drought up her way. Reg had a nasty fall at tennis recently. Skinned his elbow and bruised his hip. Nothing serious happened. The two boys are full of fun and seem to remember a good deal of their recent holiday here.

Grace seems to have got over her attack of mumps but has had a sorry time of it. Ted has not had it yet. It is practically settled that we have Rev Jennings and his wife here for six months from Feb 9th next. I hope they will settle here for good as they are looking for a suitable place to retire.

Joe and Blodwen did not break their trip home at Kroonstad as originally intended. Mumps were evidently not wanted. They found everything in order on their return.

I shall have to get busy addressing my Xmas cards next week for overseas mail. I have already received one from old Sam Parker's married sister who always sends me one. She lost her husband last year.

Last Friday evening, we went to the breaking up concert of Rocklands. It was quite good, especially the nursery rhymes acted in character by the small children. The entertainment had to be repeated.

Aunt Eliza has been very busy spring cleaning and doing up her house. Everything looks nice and spick and clean. Her deafness is not getting any better. Mom is also getting deaf. I am glad to say that both of us are better of our colds and hope we shall escape catching anything in Grahamstown.

I had quite a large post this morning and must answer some of the letters before I leave so must ask to be excused from adding more now. Hoping you are all well and that you will continue to write weekly (at least) or oftener if you can as we more and more seem to live for letters.

Much love to you all,
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
December 4th, 1935

My Dear All,

We are home again after a very pleasant trip to Grahamstown. We left here at 9.30 on Thursday morning and stopped for our lunch on the top of a hill some miles beyond of Bedford. There is a beautiful large tree at the side of the road and just below it are flat stones which evidently have been placed there by road parties for the convenience of passersby.

The view from this point was very fine overlooking, as it does, many hills and the Fish River Road some miles away. We did not go into Bedford on the way down as we wanted to get into town as early as possible. Uncle Norman drove most of the way in both directions as his eyesight is much better than mine for fast driving. As we got near to Grahamstown, the country was looking much greener as they have had a good deal of rain lately. We covered the 114 miles in just 5½ hours, including stoppages. We at once called to see Ruth and Mrs Brown, who we were pleased to see looking much better. Mom and I stayed at the same place as last year and were quite comfortable though we had an upstairs room and it was smaller. Uncle Norman and his wife stayed the first night at a boarding house close by.

The prize giving function was well arranged in the Town Hall. Denis got four nice books, all specially bound with the school emblem. One prize was for general knowledge. Some of the classes rendered various items of song etc all very creditably done. We took Mrs Brown, Ruth and Denis for a spin one afternoon and Ruth and Denis had dinner with us. Ruth had the offer of a free trip by car to Somerset East for Saturday and was glad of the opportunity of seeing Mr Holden and Mr Dawes, the executors in Mrs Holden's estate. It is now definitely decided that neither her mother nor her will receive any of the inheritance left to the late Mr Brown. Ruth and Denis are going to P.E. for Xmas holidays and will be staying at Miss Matterson's boarding house. Miss Matterson used to be in Vryburg years ago. Uncle Norman and one of his sons and his niece and I went to Port Alfred on Saturday and had morning tea with Mr and Mrs Brown, formerly of Cradock. In the afternoon we all went over the wireless station which is most wonderful and interesting. Amongst other things I learned was that the cause of bad reception when the news of the day is being broadcast from Johannesburg is the fact that so many post offices through which the land line passes is being tapped by clerks in the various offices en route. The road to Port Alfred is very hilly but the scenery is grand. It reminded me much of Devonshire. We took a run round town and saw the old school (DSG), where Mom used to go, and many other places of interest including the Botanical Gardens. On Sunday we attended the Old Settlers Commemoration church both morning and evening. Most of the Kingswood boys attend there. The congregations were not large apart from scholars.

We were up at five on Monday morning and were on the road home by quarter to six and arrived here exactly at quarter to eleven. We all enjoyed the outing. I should have mentioned that Mom and I had supper on Sunday evening with Mrs Brown and Ruth and Denis. Ruth has decided to have Denis home next terms as they are living so near the school and it will be cheaper and nicer for them to be altogether.

Postcard from Blodwen today says there is a possibility of their coming down for Xmas and also Grace may be coming. This all good news and we shall be pleased to have them. We can arrange accommodation now that we have an extra room. We have had interesting letters from Douglas, Grace and Dot since I last wrote. We do not yet know what plans have been made for the children's holidays. The new house, Douglas says, will not be ready for some months.

Dad

Am busy getting Xmas cards off to England today.

53a Bree Street
Cradock
December 11th, 1935

My Dear All,

I wonder if any of you really find much difficulty in reading my typed letters. My reason for raising the question is that Mary suggested that they would be easier to read if I spaced them as I am doing now. (*double spacing*) I dare say they would be easier but my reply was that this sort of paper is very expensive and will generally necessitate using just double the quantity of paper. Of course it would look neater if I allowed the usual margin to the letters but I have always avoided that from the economical point of view. If there is any very decided wish for a change, I will give same due consideration. Meanwhile I will revert to the old style.

In looking through copies of my dear alls recently, I find that I have practically a complete set dating back for the past three years. Sometime I may find time to reread some of them. When people get old, they are inclined to live in the past and so enjoy refreshing their memories of happenings of long ago.

It has given us much pleasure to hear from Grace that she and the children are looking to come to us during the holidays. We have not yet heard when to expect them but as school breaks up on Friday, we expect they will not be long in making their appearance. We are of course sorry that Ted cannot come with them but perhaps he could come and fetch them. We are glad to know that the mumps epidemic is apparently over.

I have an ear machine on appro to see if it will improve Mom's hearing. For some time past it has been difficult for her to hear even my melodious? voice without having to repeat myself. She does not care much for going to services or meetings for the same reason. I am hopeful that the instrument may be of some advantage.

I have visited a local dentist during the past week to have an impression for a plate to fill up the missing teeth and he came across a small piece of stump that must have been left in the jaw when Douglas was with me at Cape Town when I had a very bad tooth out. It rather upset me for a day or so. It will be a few weeks before he can fix me up as the gum will have to heal. I know I have not been able to masticate properly for a long time, being short of all my grinders.

We have had some trying weather lately. One day the maximum thermometer on our stoep registered 101 in the shade. Saturday was awful and at 9 pm, it stood at 91. Fortunately our rooms are very cool. I find walking in the great heat takes it out of me a great deal.

We have erected another improvement by the putting up of an arch over the front gate. The plumbago is in flower and I am trying to get it to cover the arch this season. I doubt if it will do it but by next year, I hope it will look very pretty.

We are hoping to hear that Joe and Blodwen may spend Xmas with us as well as Grace and Company. Douglas says his children are determined to go home. I can quite understand their excitement in watching the new home being built.

I have written the foregoing and this on Sunday afternoon as I shall not have much time tomorrow as I have five Council committee meetings to attend. In fact, all the week is pretty full up. Our opposite neighbours (Mrs Heathcote's daughter) is to be married on Wednesday afternoon. There is also a SS Xmas tree the same afternoon and evening, a political meeting tomorrow and Provincial council election on Wednesday. Tuesday evenings, when not taken up with council meetings, I like to attend Toc H meetings as that organisation is out for service to others. Talking of Toc H, you may be interested in knowing that they arrange a "pilgrimage" each year to England and the battlefields. It is a wonderful trip and as I have not seen the old country for 33 years, I am thinking of going with the next lot. In writing some scraps to some of you during the week, I mentioned that I might have some interesting news to communicate. This is it. I have not definitely decided anything but applications have to be in by January. The trip starts at the end of May, arriving by the Balmoral Castle at Southampton on Monday June 16th. They give a programme of three weeks travel for an inclusive fee of £52:10:0d. from Port Elizabeth. If desired, those taking the excursion can stay longer (at their own expense) which I

should want to do so as to see Uncle Willie and Aunt Hetty and Capt Upton and many other friends in the old country. I am not very keen on the battlefields but of course it would be interesting. I have only once trodden on continental soil and that was when on holiday at Sandgate just before I came out to SA with Uncle Willie and others and then we only took a one day excursion. Mom says she will not go as she is not fond of the sea and constant travelling. If I do go, I suppose Mom would spend the time visiting amongst you.

Another piece of news is that arrangements have been made for Rev Jennings to supply for the Rev Barnes for six months from Feb 9th. Uncle Joe was very interested in Mr Jennings when we were in Vryburg. He will be passing here before Xmas on his way by car to Cape Town. His married daughter is going with him as far as Uitenhage where she spends Xmas with her husband's family.

I think I told you that Ruth is spending the holiday at Port Elizabeth. Her address will be care of Miss Matterson, Mons Desir, Pearson Street.

As I have written so much today, I may as well send off this letter tonight instead of keeping it for Wednesday's post. We shall be very glad to hear from all of you as to your plans.

I am ordering the usual assortment of dried fruits to be sent to each home and hope it will arrive in good time and be of use to you.

Very dear love to all from,
Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
December 18th, 1935

My Dear All,

We are having a terrible dust storm this afternoon. It is not at all nice to be out. Not only so, but we are busy making preparations for the arrival of Grace and her four children in the morning. They leave Kroonstad about seven this evening and are due about 8.30 in the morning. We are very disappointed in getting news from Joe and Blodwen this morning that they will not be with us for Xmas or New Year. It appears that Joe is promoted for the time being as acting charge-man in the works and naturally does not like to ask for special leave under the circumstances. We hope that the rise may be permanent and that he will have less hard manual labour to do in the future. No doubt Grace will see them as they pass through Bloemfontein tonight.

We were shocked to hear of Len Amblers accident this week. No doubt you have heard about it. Briefly it happened on his return from Bloemfontein to his home in Brandfort by car at night, that he collided with a motorcycle and pillion rider. The pillion rider, a girlfriend of Blodwen's, was terribly injured and died a few hours after in the hospital. The coroner returned a verdict of accidental death. We can quite understand how dreadful Len and Gwen must feel about it. Douglas and Evelyn went over by car to try and render as much comfort as possible. We are very sorry for his aged parents at Cape Town whom we know very well. They had just been down to visit them.

Ruth and Denis are in Port Elizabeth and I am glad to say they are enjoying themselves. Ruth has taken up a course of Tromp von Diggilans health treatment and says it is doing her a lot of good. Keep it up Ruth. Perhaps some of the other members of our family might like to do the same.

We were very sorry to hear of little Merle's accident. Blodwen wrote that she heard a crash in an adjoining room and found that the wee child had climbed on to the wireless cabinet and pulled it over on top of her. Her head was cut and they had to have the doctor. However the latest report is that she is alright.

Dot seems very bust with visitors. Reg has erected a swing for the entertainment of the juvenile visitors. I hope rain has fallen ere this in their parts as I notice in the papers and over the wireless that the drought had been very severe in those parts. It is Reg's birthday on 21st. Many happy returns, Reg.

In case I do not write again before Xmas, let me wish you all the best of all for the coming season. Last year we were more together than we shall be this but I do hope you will all be very happy.

Blodwen writes suggesting that Joe goes with me to England. Quite a good idea if it was at all likely of coming off. I fear it is doomed to disappointment as there seems to be too many difficulties in the way. I have written to enquire if there is a possibility of a similar trip being organised in 1937.

We have changed our lounge furniture round a bit so as to give more room. The folding ottoman (Aunt Emmie called it a railway seat) has gone into the spare room as a double bed. My writing desk now faces the wall instead of the middle of the room. The marble top table that used to be at Grass Ridge is now in the middle of the room. You must come and see it for yourselves.

The archway over the front gate is getting covered with flowering plumbago.

I am posting the balance of 200 Xmas cards today. Quite a number have been received from overseas etc so far. I have kept a record for some years to whom I send and from whom I receive cards. It is nice to keep in touch with friends in this way. Much love to one and all and may you have a happy Xmas and bright New Year.

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
December 21st, 1935
The longest day in the year.

My Dear All,

Xmas will soon be here and unless I post today, I do not think you will hear from us before the 25th.

Well, Grace and her four children arrived on Thursday morning. The train was an hour and half late. There were a number of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides on the same train going to camp at Port Elizabeth who kept them very lively. Grace says they were asleep when they passed Bloemfontein so do not know if Joe or Blodwen were at the station to see them. It was past eleven when they passed. The day they arrived, we had a crowd of visitors. Aunt Eliza came with Lizzie Wilkie, now Mrs Colebrook and three of her boys. She has just arrived from Steynsburg on her way to Somerset East. She called on us when in Vryburg many years ago and I did not recognise her. Aunt Letty also came and in the evening we had a number of more visitors. I am sure it was our record day for callers. They have only been here a couple of days and have already "done" the park, Karoo garden, Warm bath, besides a general tour of the town. No one has bathed yet as the bath is being filled but the children are very anxious to have a swim. The weather has been too cool for it so far but today is warmer. Ernest's youngest boy, Jeffrey, has interested himself in the young folk and they have been along to the Poplars this morning to see the workshop etc. He has made a sort of wagon out of old wheels which is causing all a good deal of amusement.

Uncle Herbert and Aunt Jessie were here to dinner yesterday and we invited them to come to us for Xmas dinner but instead they have asked us all to go out to them on Xmas Day. We have arranged to take our turkey and Xmas pudding with us after breakfast and return in the evening. It was very nice of them and I am sure the children, as well as the grown ups, will enjoy the outing, provided the weather is nice. We had a heavy thunderstorm on Sunday and again on Wednesday and it has been quite cool ever since. Uncle Herbert seemed quite nicely yesterday. I had a letter from the Dr who performed the operation. He asked me to keep him informed every three months as to how he is getting on.

We have had quite a number of Xmas cards and letters already. Dorothy wrote an interesting account of their trip on Dingaans Day to the Woodbush waterfall. Mom and I went there when we were up with them in July. I am enclosing the letter to Joe asking him to send it to Douglas as it is so interesting. They went up the waterfall for some distance and in coming down, the rocks were so slippery that they fell but no one was seriously hurt.

I must stop now as we are going out to the Warm bath again and may not be back in time to catch the afternoon post.

Needless to say we shall be thinking of you all in your various homes and trust you will all have a very happy time together in your homes.

We are all well and shall be glad to hear how you have spent the day.

Yours as ever,

Dad

53a Bree Street
Cradock
December 29th, 1935

My Dear All,

Christmas has come and gone. I must try to tell you something of what we have done with ourselves. First of all let me thank all of you who have so kindly remembered us with your good wishes and tokens of your love. We have received two beautiful cushions exactly alike, one from Grace and the other from Dot, both their own handiwork. I learn that it was a made up plan between them. At present they are adorning our settee. Evelyn sent a handy towel for visitors which is also acceptable. Thanks to Blodwen for a nice box of assorted biscuits. Mom also was fortunate in receiving a present of stockings, hankies, etc. I must thank Dot and Reg for a necktie and Grace for a wiper for my glasses. So far, I have received about 150 Xmas cards and letters from all over the country and beyond the seas. It is nice to feel that one is still remembered by friends.

Xmas Day started early with us. We all attended service in the Methodist Church at seven am. A collection was taken on behalf of the Marsh Memorial Homes at Rondebosch amounting to £3/10/1d. Breakfast followed immediately and by ten to nine we were off to Fish River with a lunch basket containing portions of a cooked turkey and other good things. All seven of us travelled comfortably arriving at Uncle Herbert's about ten. We had a hearty welcome from all. Uncle Gervase left shortly after our arrival to spend part of the day with two of his daughters who are staying at Katkop and also intended going to see Uncle Walter at Groenkloof and also drop in at Grass Ridge. The children were very happy running about the place. The long stoeps round the house gave them plenty of scope. Nurse Loscomb of Cradock is staying there for the present and makes herself very useful and is interested in all that goes on. Iris had gone to her parents for the day. Xmas dinner was duly served. I was honoured by being called upon to carve the roast beef and portions of turkey we had taken with us. Everything was very nice and greatly enjoyed. We did not take our Xmas pudding – that is still in reserve here and will be served on New Year's Day most likely. Aunt Jessie was responsible for the one we had. The usual supply of tickies and buttons were of course eagerly looked for. In the afternoon Uncle Jack and Aunt Agnes, Winnie and her three children and her husband and some of us hurried up to the station to hear the King's speech but were not in time for it. We left for Katkop about five. It is only five miles from Saltpans drift. The young people were playing tennis and the older folk enjoyed talking. We had hoped to hear the record of the King's speech but were again disappointed. We waited until about nine and then left for home. The children had a glorious day and enjoyed everything. They got a bit tired but not cross coming home. We all went straight to bed as soon as we got home, about 10.30.

I must refer to Xmas Eve happenings. I have rather put the cart before the horse. We had intended having a proper Xmas tree if Joe and Blodwen has been able to come with their children. However we hung all the presents on the grapefruit tree in the afternoon whilst I had taken the children to the Warm bath. Aunt Letty was spending the afternoon. We asked Aunt Letty to distribute the gifts and the children were quite excited with what came to them. Grace had brought their gifts from the Aunts as well as parcels from Dorothy and others. Thanks for everything sent.

Boxing Day was terribly hot, the hottest we have experienced this summer. My thermometer registered 110 in the shade off the stoep. All except Mom bathed in the Warm bath and enjoyed it. Pam and Jean went to a picnic with Mrs Radford and about eight other children to Mrs Hartman's farm yesterday. The rest of us went to afternoon tea at Agnes Williams'. Boxing night was so hot that no one wanted more than a sheet to cover them whilst the next night was so cold that blankets and rugs were needed. Such has been the changeable weather. We have been interested in listening to the test match score from Johannesburg. The children have been to the slippery rocks with me and enjoyed the sensation of coming down the hill.

One day Mrs Radford invited the two girls to join her in a picnic with her children. She had ten of them in her car and took them to Mrs Hartman's. It turned out to be a very cold and miserable day and Pam was a little upset the following day but is alright again now.

Sunday afternoon we took a run out along the Tarka road and called at a farm where we thought old Mrs Willie Trollip lived. We found her out but her daughter, who used to live with us when she was a schoolgirl was in. She is now married and her mother and sister are living with her. She has two grown up boys. We have not seen her for over thirty years I think. As we were within a few miles of the Dodds, we went on and saw them. They had returned the same morning from a holiday at Port Elizabeth and were pleased to see us and hear news of the family. I expect they will come and see us in town whilst Grace is still here.

They saw Ruth in P.E. and report her much better in health. This is good news.

We have arranged to go to Grass Ridge for New Years Day and will probably spend the night there. We hope to see Uncle Walter before returning. We expect to go to Spelmanskop whilst the holidays are still on.

Today, Monday, I got the local chemist to examine my eyes. I have not had them examined for six months. He says, what I anticipated, that the left eye is decidedly more opaque. It is practically useless and suggests that it might be worthwhile letting the Johannesburg specialist operate on it in the hope of improving matters. For one thing I do not like the altitude of Johannesburg and another thing, my regular man in Cape Town does not recommend operating before it is "ripe". There is also the possibility of no improvement being effected and so £100 or so may be thrown away. However, it gives one something to think about.

Ted and Dot have written telling how they spent Xmas and no doubt we shall hear from the rest of you as when happened.

We all weighed ourselves at the station scale a few days after Grace and children arrived. The following was the result. Mom 174, Dad 164, Grace 130, David 65, Harold 68, Pam 57 and Jean 42. The children did not have coats or shoes and socks on.

Grace has driven the car a few times and will try to get her driver's licence whilst here. I have very reluctantly, and I consider unnecessarily, decided to give up driving for the present and may even sell the car as I do not want to be blamed should an accident happen.

My correspondence has got into arrear so you must excuse me if I have not answered all your queries. I will go through your letters as opportunity offers. I am glad to say we are all keeping very well.

Will close now hoping that the new year will bring to all of you much happiness, good health, and as much prosperity as is good for you. No doubt there have been disappointments to some, if not to all, during the year now closing but that is part of the discipline of life. Count your blessings and be thankful for what God has given you. We must expect changes.

Much love to each and all

Dad