

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Here beginneth another year of my circle letters. I have now ten years filed away. If ever they will be read again remains to be seen. However, they do not occupy much space in my filing cabinet and no doubt they will be thrown on the scrap heap one of these days. However it has afforded me a good deal of pleasure in writing them. I am fully conscious that the typing is far from what it should be. I never took a course of lessons in the art and never have had the time to re-read what I have written so at the commencement of another volume, I must apologise for typographical and other errors that I have made in the past – and may make in the future. My object in writing has been to keep the family in touch with each other as far as possible. I sometimes come across a person who says they have not heard from their brothers or sisters for years. It seems dreadful to me. I do like to hear from every member of the circle each week but I realise that that is not always possible, but I do know by past experience that when once the weekly letter is skipped, it is more difficult to resume a regular correspondence. So much by way of introduction to the New Year. May the year bring peace to the troubled world. We must be thankful that we have been spared any break in the family circle. We cannot expect the circle to remain unbroken indefinitely so it behoves us all to be prepared for whatever may happen. A striking example has happened only this week. On Saturday morning last I was talking to Mr Moorcroft senior in his shop about poultry as the farmer's wife who has been supplying us with a fowl each week for a year or so has notified us that her supply is finished for a few months. Mr Moorcroft appeared in his usual health and after wishing each other a happy New Year, we parted. Early on Sunday morning he had a sudden heart attack and passed away in a few minutes. Dulcie – his daughter-in-law, was in hospital at the time having had an operation on her foot. She was brought home at once. He was buried on Monday. I have a photo of the Town Councillors taken in December 1904 when he and I were together. I am the only one of the nine in the group who is still living. It makes one feel quite lonely. Be prepared!

I have been busy answering my Xmas letters and only have one or two still to do. (9.30 a.m.) Have just been interrupted by a call from Mr and Mrs Robb Yinkie, Geard that was. They are on their way home to Rhodesia and have been visiting their people. Had breakfast with Sidney Geard at Adelaide. They could not stop, more than to have a few words and look round the house and garden. She is looking just the same and was pleased to see us.

I have recently compiled a statement regarding the ages of the Collett clan and the result is, I think, a world record. The eleven children still living up to January 1<sup>st</sup> 1942, 825 years 57 months, an average of 75 years each if you add Uncle Herbert's age, 79 years and 4 months, that gives an average for the 12 children of 75 years 5 months. The eldest, Uncle Walter, 86 and 7 months and the youngest, Uncle Dudley, is 63 and 6 months. Some record.

We have been enjoying green mealies out of our garden lately. On New Year's Day we had Rev Weavers and Aunt Charlotte to dinner. Mrs Weavers is in Port Elizabeth with her son who is better at the coast.

I intended going to the watch night service but Mom thought it too cold so did not go but instead decided I would listen in to General Smuts but evidently I dropped off to sleep and only woke when the railway engines etc. started their New Year noises. I looked at my watch and found it had stopped at 11.15. The spring had broken. Quite a bad start for the New Year.

After dinner. The only letter delivered today is one from Dot telling of their doings on New Year's Day. They are building a bird cage under the trees in their garden, the little boys being interested and helping in the work. They also took a run up to Pietersburg and saw Ted Browne family. Aunt Emmie, in a letter to Aunt Eliza, tells of the pleasure she had in seeing Joe's film of the Golden Wedding etc. but we have not heard from Uitenhage yet. Hope they found the house and everything in good order when they got home. Mrs Stock is in hospital, had a slight stroke we fear. Aunt Eliza is pleased that her former maid, Maggie, who has been working in Cape Town is back in Cradock and is going to work for her again. Love from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It is Tuesday afternoon and I am writing on the back veranda. There is plenty of thunder about and I am hoping that before I have finished this letter, we shall have a good downpour. I must correct a remark made in a recent dear all that the drought had broken in Vryburg. Only partially would be more correct. At Douglas', they are needing much more rain. They are ready for ploughing but unless it rains very shortly, they will not be likely to get any crops this year. Some of their lands are sown but much more still has to be done.

Practically the whole of yesterday I was working on the rainfall for the past 64 years at Cradock taking out the totals and averages for each year and for each month. There were hundreds of calculations. A summary of some will appear in the Midland News. Last year we had over seven inches less than the year before. The average for 64 years is 13.61 inches.

Les Amblers two children are spending part of their holidays at Douglas'. Douglas says the children, whilst Roy was there, had great fun in playing with the hose pipe, presumably whilst in their bathing costumes. The one holding the hose had to guard the tap. We are sorry to hear that Douglas is having trouble with his boring machine. I understand the drill has stuck in a borehole and he cannot get it out.

Congratulations to David on passing his J.C. exam. He is going on to matric. Grace reports having some good rains on the plot. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, we had green mealies and new potatoes for dinner out of our own garden. The mealies are not much of it but better than nothing. The garden is more of a worry than a pleasure. Our old boy is too old to do the work and has to sit down holding the hose to water the garden, etc. He finds that he cannot cut the grass at the back as his arms are too weak.

Our old boy John, who we took to East London three years ago, came to see us last week. He was in uniform down on leave from the Transvaal. He was very smart and well behaved. He came to see us and explained why he did not come to work when I engaged him some months ago. It appears that he went to the front just at that time. He has greatly improved in health.

Mary returned from her case in Middelburg last Wednesday and left the next day for a holiday at Hogsback. We miss her visits. Alison's daughter, Joan, is leaving tomorrow for Cape Town. She has an appointment on the staff at Rosebank School. She has been in charge of the English section of the kindergarten at Rocklands. She has been very popular there.

You will be sorry to hear that Rev Legg has been very ill at his new appointment at Underburg. Heart trouble. I wish I was near enough to help him.

Joe and Blodwen got home safely and found the house alright but the garden was far from right. Blodwen has a new electric stove and is very pleased with it. Since our return from Grass Ridge, we have only been using our electric. It certainly is cheaper for us than the big stove. Of course, like everything else, it wants watching.

Wednesday 6.30 a.m. Five points of rain fell during the night and I hope a good deal more will fall during the day.

I suppose you will want to know how we celebrated my 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Falling as it did on Sunday, we did not get any post until Monday morning. We invited Rev Weavers to dinner for Sunday as Mrs Weavers is still away but he had accepted a previous invitation. However he came to afternoon tea and again after service. Uncle Walter and Olive came in the afternoon. Aunt Eliza very kindly gave me a cake made by her own hands. She has always been a wonderful cook and in spite of her advanced age and infirmity, has certainly not lost anything of the art. It was very nice. We also had a bought cake – no candles. Mr and Mrs Hultzer also came in after service.

Thanks for birthday letters so far received. If good wishes count for anything, I am sure we should be very fortunate. I am sure I do not deserve at all the good things I receive but am very thankful for the blessings which have been vouchsafed to me. I think my mother looked upon me as being a delicate child. Amongst the old photographs, I have one of Aunt Emmie and myself, Auntie was five and me seven. On the back of the photo my Mother has written in ink "this is for

Charlie's if he survives his mother". It will be 42 years next month since my Mother passed away. So it is evident that I was not such a sickly child as Mother thought. This is my 78<sup>th</sup> milestone and am still able to take a little nourishment and sit up whilst the bed is being made. So many of my friends remark how well I am looking. I often wish I was as well as I look. As I have said before, I have much to be thankful for, and I am thankful. I suppose we all at some time or other admit that we have made mistakes in our lives. I am more and more realising that it may have been a mistake in purchasing this house. The garden is more a source of worry and liability than an asset, servants are a worry and expense etc. If we were living in a comfortable flat where we could get a mid-day meal out and be free of servant trouble etc. it would be better for us. Perhaps way may open in that direction some day.

In less than a month from now we hope to celebrate Mom's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I wonder if we shall be able to secure a supply of candles for that occasion. Mom will be the fourth in the Collett family to pass the 80<sup>th</sup> and still living. Did I tell you that the average of the eleven brothers and sisters still living is 75 years and a few months. I guess – here I was interrupted by a call from Beryl and Barbara who had just come in from Fish River. I forget what I was going to say, Rouena and Hope also came in later and have enjoyed some of our figs which are now ripening. Barbara is signing on for active service as a nurse. Beryl says her mother is much better for her change to Port Elizabeth. It is not settled what Freda is going to do but it seems likely that the children will be split up amongst different members of the family. The twins may come to Gervase's for schooling but nothing is decided yet. Beryl is looking very well and was interested in hearing of the family. I went over to the station to see Joan off to Cape Town by the early train and saw Vacey Collett – now Mrs Hartley - and her baby who has gone on a visit to her home at Collett Siding. She had written saying she hoped to come and see us but as she went by train, that is out of the question.

Uncle Gervase has a law case pending with his late foreman who claims half the yield of his crops. Beryl says the drought in Middelburg district is very serious. They have no fruit or anything.

We are sorry that the Websters are leaving Cradock. He has been promoted to the managership of the Land Bank at Cape Town. They called the other evening. Ruth and John both wrote conveying congratulations. Her husband remembered me at the YMCA but I cannot call him to mind. He is helping at the University at present. Letter from Grace says that they have had more showers and is trying to start her garden again. They have visitors during the holidays.

Dot writes that the outside birdcage is finished, much to the delight of the children and their friends, and also to the birds.

Later, 3.30. No more than six points of rain so far today. Perhaps it will come on again during the night. We go up to see Aunt Eliza sometimes in the evenings whilst she is all alone.

Aunt Emmie and Joyce are having a nice time at Sea Point. The weather has been cold there. We wonder when Joyce will be coming back. No word of Dudley coming down on leave.

Thanks again to all of you for all the good wishes you have sent for my birthday and trusting you are all well,

Lots of love from  
Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I notice that the Anti-Waste Authorities are urging the public to economise in the use of paper etc. I notice that some of you still do not use both sides of the paper in writing your letters. I cannot very well do so as the paper is so thin but I have always used close typing and very little margin. For the same reason of economy, I am using old envelopes that have come to me containing Xmas cards. Not only will it save paper but also save buying. I hope you will not mind.

I am glad to say that the University made a serious mistake in its first announcement regarding Denis' success in his final B.A. exam. Not only did he get Honours in History but also in Geography, thus securing a double First and qualifying him for an exhibition scholarship. No award has yet been made but we understand that this success may entitle Denis to a chance of winning the Rhodes Scholarship and going to Oxford. It is a great pity the University made such a careless blunder in their first announcement. Ruth and ourselves have received a number of congratulations on this splendid success. I have not got Denis' present address or would write to him. Guy Butler failed in his second year exam but is having another try shortly in the subjects which failed him. Hope he is successful this time. He is at present at Potchefstroom camp.

Mary returned from a week holiday at Hogsback on Saturday last. Unfortunately she was not well when she returned but has had an offer of a lift by car to Graaff Reinet and is going over to Aunt Letty for a couple of weeks.

Aunt Eliza's former servant, Maggie, who has been working in Cape Town for some months earning good money, has returned and is going back to work for her again. She was very good before and understands exactly what to do.

Joyce and Raymond will not be back for the opening of school next Monday. She has a good deal of work to see to in Cape Town. They have been spending the whole of this month at Sea Point with Aunt Emmie.

Last evening we had Mr Thomas and friends of his, Mr and Mrs Cooke, from Ipswich. Mary also came. He is out for his health and has been travelling about a good deal to find a suitable place to live. He has a business in England but had to leave it to others. He is one of 12 and is very interesting company. They have two children with them.

I am enclosing with this, a copy of verses my brother Joe used to recite, "There is no sect in Heaven". It is quite good. I am trying to get a complete copy of another recitation about Baby's toothies. I have part of it but not the whole.

Nurse Edith returns to East London next week. She is coming to town before leaving.

The weather has not been so hot during the past week, the nights are beautifully cool but that means no rain. We still have enough rainwater for our baths etc.

I wonder if you remember that it was Harold's 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 16<sup>th</sup> had he been living.

I made a mistake in my last week's letter in stating that Harry Collett's daughter, Mrs King. It should have read Mrs Hartley.

Had a very interesting letter from Charlie Collett at Umzimkhulu. He says they are experiencing the severest drought ever known in those parts.

We understand that arrangements have been made for Eric and Freda's twins to go to school at Fish River. They will board with Aunt Rowena. We do not know if they are there yet. Hope to see them if they are.

We are finding that having our post delivered is more convenient than having a private box. We generally get two deliveries a day.

Later. Joe writes that he has more films for exhibition but does not know when we shall see them. Denis writes that they had four inches rain last week in Potchefstroom. His address up to Feb 14<sup>th</sup> is Number 60i38. Actg S/M Course, 112A Artillery School, Potchefstroom Camp. Dot writes she is busy in her gardening work. They had a hurried trip on official business to Pretoria and they all went and enjoyed themselves. No more rainfall.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Let me correct a mistake I made in my last week's letter. I said that Guy had failed his exam. It should have been Jeffrey. He is having another shot at it later in the year. Hope he will be successful.

I am thankful to be able to report that we have had beautiful rains this week. On Sunday afternoon, Mom and I went to the hospital to see Mrs Stock who is now getting much better. She has been there about a month. It looked as though a storm was coming so we went by taxi. After calling on the Besters who were in this house when we bought it – they have recently bought a new house next to the Ledbetters' – we went to see Dulcie Moorcroft who is still suffering from the after effects of an operation on her foot. Whilst there, the rain came down heavily. There was a little hail with it but did not do any damage. Mr Moorcroft offered to motor us home but his car had gone out to fetch some of the children from the Warm Bath, so we started to walk. Fortunately as we passed a house of one of the Municipal officials, they kindly drove us home. We had 30 points that afternoon. Then on Monday, we had another storm registering 20 points and yesterday still another 30. The garden is properly wet now and figs are ripening very fast.

I am enclosing some verses I have copied from Aunt Rouena's autograph book which are appropriate to the occasion. "Rain drops on the roof". I hope that Vryburg and other parts that were so dry have been similarly blessed. A lady recently from Pretoria told me that there, the grass in the streets was being mown. The Free State was also looking grand.

Tomorrow Douglas and Evelyn celebrate their 24<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Silver Wedding next year.

My letter next week may be a day late owing to Mom's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. I have sent a postcard to the brothers and sisters saying we shall be pleased to see any of them but we are not having any special function. When Uncle had his 80<sup>th</sup>, we arranged for as many as possible to visit him at Groen Kloof. It would have been very nice if any of the family could be with us but as you were all here so recently – three months now – we cannot expect you so soon again. However no doubt you will be with us in spirit. I have suggested placing 80 matches on the cake. We must also get a snap of Mom on the day.

Our grapes seem slow in ripening but we appear to have a good crop.

Ted's parents are on a visit to Kroonstad. Our neighbour Mrs Graham Armstrong has just returned from there but is sorry she was not able to call on Grace and family. She says she saw Jean in the street one day. She and her daughter had supper with us last evening and stayed with Mom whilst I was at the Town Council meeting. The Mayor has had to go to Port Elizabeth to consult a specialist regarding his eyes so I had to preside.

Joyce is still at Cape Town. From all accounts the weather has been kind to them. Raymond has enjoyed bathing. Aunt Emmie has been staying with them at Sea Point. In a letter from Dudley, he says they are rationed with only two cups of water per day. After a shave, he used the same water for washing socks etc. He did not say how much he drank after that. He had been in some of the fighting. So far there has been no casualties amongst any of the Colletts.

Mary is still at Graaff Reinet and we hope better for the change. After dinner. Letters from Grace and Dot today. Dot says that Denis has been turned down for military service owing to his eyes. That's hard on him. We had not heard of it. Grace suggests we go for a holiday to them. All I can say at present is we will think about it. We are both keeping well and have much to be thankful for.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Tuesday February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

As there is not much chance of being able to do much or any writing tomorrow, I think I had better try to get my usual off today. Mom has already received letters from most of the family congratulating her on reaching her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. I hope the weather will be kind to us. It is hot enough today for anything. So far we don't know if any of the brothers or sisters will be coming in but owing to the petrol rationing, they are getting more careful about travelling about. We will tell you more when it is over.

Douglas and Evelyn write that they are still wanting rain very badly. They say they have never had such a dry time. Aunt Rosa complains the same. She enquires about the Vryburg family.

Joe writes that he has sold his house in Bloemfontein for £100 more than he gave for it and in addition he lived in it for three years rent free. Since he left, he has also been paid £100 in rent from the party he let it to. So it has been a very good investment. Shall be very glad if I can do the same with this house. He would like us very much to go and live in Uitenhage. He says self contained flats are available. He is thinking of buying another house there but they are very scarce. We have had another enquiry for letting this house but I would prefer to sell than let. Joe suggests that they might all come to us for the long weekend at Easter. We hope they do. He has another film to show. They have had lots of rain there. They think their house is damp.

Reg and Dot also write that the heat has been excessive with them and no rain. They are all well. Children back at school.

Kate Owen writes that Eric and Freda have put the twins to school in Kimberley – they are staying with a friend of Freda's. Pat is sharing a room with Eric and gets his meals out. Freda is staying on the farm with Peter and doing the best she can. Douglas has offered to manage the farm for them on certain conditions.

Aunt Emmie and Joyce have returned from Sea Point having had very good weather for their holiday and both are feeling better for the change. Joyce continues to receive good news from Dudley who is still hoping to get home on leave. She looks to return to Aunt Eliza in about two weeks time. Maggie, who worked for Aunt Eliza for some years and then went to Cape Town where she had a good situation, returned for a holiday at Xmas time and saw Aunt Eliza and promised she would stay in Cradock and work for her again. However, she has gone back to Cape Town without saying anything to Aunt Eliza about her promise. The present girl she has, has promised to stay on until the end of February. I am glad to say that Aunt is keeping very well and is always busy knitting or mending or writing and reading. We go to see her as often as we can.

The annual meeting of the Public Library was held on Saturday evening – only five members were present. They have elected me as secretary. I held that office before I went to Vryburg. I don't think it will involve very much work.

I notice that I am still going down in weight, am now 144½ lbs. For all that, I am keeping pretty well except for that "tired feeling". Some days I do not go up town at all. I certainly do not go for the pleasure of it.

One of the valves of my wireless set gave in on Sunday so we were without news all day. However I got it fixed up yesterday and we live again.

Our figs have been very nice, they are about finished for the time being.

Aunt Letty has not been very well but Mary reports her being better. Mary is still in Graaff Reinet district. She has been nursing an old lady there and there is no word as to when she is returning. Guy and wife have been down on leave and returned last night. Geoffrey is also back in order to resume his studies. Shall try to see Danie when he passes down again. Nurse Edith returned to East London on Friday night. The train was late so we did not see her at the station as she passed through.

I dare say I shall write a "special edition" later in the week. Goodbye.

Love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Thursday February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Whilst the happenings of yesterday are fresh in my memory, I had better commit them to paper. First let me say that we missed the help of our daughters and friends in making things and arranging them. Mrs Armstrong, who has always been a great help, was busy in the morning helping at the War Market tea in the open air when £14 odd was added to the funds. Mom made sandwiches etc. and I generally pottered about arranging the room etc. The cake, a square one with the dates 1862-1942, arrived on Tuesday afternoon and was greatly admired. It was made by Mr Marais and everyone was pleased with its flavour, colour etc. Quite a good advertisement for him. We ordered a bunch of flowers from the park and Mrs Garlake, Mrs Howard also sent some. The Women's Auxiliary of the Methodist Church sent a beautiful basket of assorted flowers which were greatly admired. The dining room table looked very nice. Ruth's Golden Wedding present of cut glass vases stood each side of the cake whilst other decorations and eats were suitably arranged. Let me say here and now, that this is the last function we shall arrange by ourselves. It is far too much for Mom to do alone. Mr and Miss Metcalf asked if they might come in the morning and Mr Stock and Mrs Ledbetter also came. Uncle Dudley and Aunt Katie popped in for just a few minutes and could not stay for a cup of tea or anything. Uncle Bertie and Aunt Annie and their two girls, May and Iris, came just before dinner. We had not seen them for quite a long time. Uncle Norman's son, Dick, was here at dinner time. After dinner, and a sharp shower (only four points), we feared that others whom we had asked to come would not turn up. Most of them did between 3.30 and 4.30. We sent for Aunt Charlotte by taxi. She is 86 and seemed to enjoy herself. There were only 14, including ourselves here in the afternoon. Mr and Mrs Weavers made short speeches and Mrs van Rensburg to which I had to reply. Some of the ladies enjoyed walking about in the garden. We were sorry that Aunt Eliza did not see her way to come down. I offered for our boy to wheel her but she was expecting someone to call. The heat was also against her coming out. Shall try to go and see her today. We had congratulatory telegrams from Ted and family, Aunt Letty and all at Vrede. Also phone messages from Mary, Enid, Barbara and Hultzers. All of the family have also written to Mom who will have plenty to do in answering all her correspondence. Let me here thank you all, on her behalf, for your thoughtfulness. Aunt Jessie has phoned this a.m. She thought the day was today. Clifford Saunders dropped in for supper after his drilling. Ernest also called. Uncle Walter and Olive are over at Graaff Reinet or somewhere so of course they could not be here. There are now four of the family over 80. what she is going to do, her plans are not at all matured. She has given notice to give

Mary is still nursing an old lady in Graaff Reinet. She does not know up her room at the end of this month as the landlady has put up the rent. We hope it does not mean that she may be leaving Cradock.

I do not know that there is more to say regarding the doings of yesterday except to say how thankful we all are that Mom has been spared for so long and that she enjoys such good health and has been such a good Mother to you all. The following lines I have copied from Aunt Rouena's writing album.

#### ONE MOTHER

Hundreds of stars in the evening sky,  
Hundreds of shells on the shore together,  
Hundreds of birds that go singing by,  
Hundreds of bees in the sunny weather,  
Hundreds of dewdrops to greet the dawn,  
Hundreds of lambs in the purple clover,  
Hundreds of butterflies on the lawn,  
But only ONE MOTHER the wide world over.

Much love to each and all from, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I have been giving you extra long letters lately but this week I do not seem to have anything to write about, but I do not like to let a week go by without keeping in touch with you all. One never knows how much longer we may be able to carry on in this way.

We have got back to normal after the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary festivities and I do not intend to have any more such functions unless we have competent assistance. The W.C.T.U. have asked to meet here tomorrow as I am down to address them on Francis Willard, who by the way I have not been able to find any literature respecting. The ladies are doing all the providing so Mom will not be bothered with the catering. Next Sunday is "goodwill" and I see I am planned for the morning appointment.

Uncle Walter and Olive are back from Graaff Reinet. Uncle's mind and memory seem to be failing him and Olive is concerned about him. She is all alone there and has not been able to get the telephone laid on yet.

Aunt Charlotte too is feeling that she is not long for this world, she will be 86 in April. She wants me to be her executor so had to spend some time with her yesterday afternoon finding out what she wants done when the occasion arises. She has been staying at the Old Peoples Home. Aunt Emmie used to live in that house years ago.

Last week we spent an hour or two at Mrs Stock's house. She was in hospital for about six weeks and has to be very careful and rest as much as she can for some time to come. Her elder sister, Miss Phillips, lives next door to her. She is nearly blind – suffering from the same complaint as me, only the doctor says he cannot operate on her eye. Last evening we spent a quiet evening with friends of Mr Thomas from Ipswich. He and his wife and two children are here for his health.

I don't think I told you that Mom had her photo taken the day before her birthday. Hope you will be pleased with the result. The prints will not be ready for another week or so.

We are sorry to hear of Rev Legg's serious illness. Hope he will benefit from his enforced rest.

Mrs Willie Saunders and May came to see us a day or so ago. May is not nursing anymore but is taking care of her mother. They are all well.

Joe in a recent letter suggests coming to us at Easter. We hope this materialises. We have not heard from them this week yet.

Letter from Grace this morning says that if we should decide to leave here, she would come and help pack etc. but nothing is at all decided. Ted's parents have returned to Doonside. They would like to be nearer town. They find it very lonely there at Doonside.

Dot writes that Donald Hudson has been down on leave. Mrs Hudson does not want to stay at East London after the end of this month if possible. They have a new minister, Rev Massey, at Pietersburg and like him very much.

I wonder if you remember Uncle Joe reciting the following. There are two lines missing and I wonder if any of you can fill them in.

**The Unfinished Baby**

A little baby brother  
Had come to live with Flo  
And she wanted it brought to table  
So that it might eat and grow.

Wait a while said Grandma,  
In answer to her plea,  
For little things that have no teeth  
Can't eat like you and me.

Why hasn't it got teeth?  
Asked Flo in great surprise,  
Oh my, but isn't it funny  
No teeth, but nose and eyes.

To be continued. Love from Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I was interrupted last week and did not have time to insert another sheet in the typewriter so must start off this morning and finish the poem, if such it can be called.

Why hasn't it got teeth, Grandma?  
Asked Flo in great surprise,  
Oh my, but isn't it funny  
No teeth, but nose and eyes.

That afternoon to the table,  
With paper, pen and ink,  
Went Flo, saying don't talk to me Granny  
Or else you will disturb my think.

(two lines are missing here)  
"Dear God" the baby you sent us  
Is awfully good and sweet,  
But because he has no toofies  
The poor little thing can't eat.

That's why I am writing this letter,  
On purpose to let you know,  
Please come and finish the baby  
That's all, from little Flo

The past week has been a full one and this one is also pretty full. On Thursday we went to evening service as usual and were surprised to see Mr and Mrs Thompson from Uitenhage there. We used to sit just behind them in the Methodist Church at Observatory. He has been on the sick list for the past few months and came here for a change. Am pleased to say he is much better. They are coming to supper on Friday. They know the Hultzers, who also lived in Uitenhage for years. We spent the evening at the Hultzers last evening with them. He wishes we would go and live in Uitenhage.

Monday I had seven committee meetings. The last one was a Boy Scout committee of management. Ernest had been Chairman for some years but owing to Mr Curson's death, he has not been able to give the time and attention to it. I have taken over the chairmanship until another can be found.

A few nights ago I had a distressing dream that one of you had passed away suddenly. Then a few minutes before five, the telephone rang twice before I could reach it. I wondered what had happened, was it bad news or what? The voice spoke Afrikaans and eventually found he had called up the wrong number.

I am glad to be able to report that we have had a few nice showers the last few days but the weather remains very close and sultry. The tanks are a long way from being full.

Our figs are about finished. We have been sending a basketful to the station for the troops every morning for some time. The grapes are now coming on better after the rain. We are sending some to the station now.

Mary is due back from Graaff Reinet about 26<sup>th</sup>. She is storing her goods and chattels for the present. No word when Joyce is coming. Holidays will be on next month again. Denis has gone home again. We did not know of his passing. He has been away from Ruth for about three months. It was Pam's birthday yesterday and Mr Mackenzie's on Friday. Many happy returns to each.

Mom has been troubled with hay fever. Sunday morning she woke coughing and sneezing badly. She did not go to service in the morning but since we have removed all flowers from the house, she has been better. We will get doctor to overhaul her. Perhaps we will take a change before Easter.

We have received letters from each home within the last few days. We are always glad to hear and hope it is not too much of a burden to write weekly, if at all possible.

Douglas reports that Rex is down from Pretoria on leave and expects to go north very shortly. We do not know yet in what capacity or regiment but it seems very soon after he went into training. We shall be interested in hearing further details.

Grace reports that after several months she has been playing tennis and is suffering from stiffness in consequence. Pam was having some friends out for her birthday.

Joe is working longer hours than ever. Saturday afternoons he has to work as well consequently has very little time for rest or recreation. They are thinking of buying a house in a better part of the town. They would like us to go and have a look round ourselves.

Dot has been escorting their new minister round to see the local attendees of the church. He has made a very favourable impression.

This evening Mom and I are going to a farewell to the minister and wife of the Baptist Church. He is leaving for Cape Town and will be stationed at Sea Point. He has not been here for long and has done exceedingly well.

I saw Aunt Eliza this morning and she is expecting Joyce and Ray tomorrow night. They have been away nearly two and a half months.

There were 26 at the WCTU meeting in our dining room last Thursday afternoon. We did not do the providing of eats but I was down for an address. I also took the service on Sunday morning, Good Will Day.

Uncle Norman's son, Dick, is in for drilling this afternoon and says they have heard from each of the three brothers up north and they are all well. Very few of the Cradock boys have been injured so far.

The date of the centenary services in connection with the church are provisionally fixed for Sunday and Monday May 10 and 11<sup>th</sup>. We may probably try to go for a holiday before then. Aunt Emmie would like me to go and see her at Cape Town.

Our crop of figs are about finished for the present but the grapes are coming on nicely. Now that we have had a little rain, they should be better still.

We are going to see Uncle Walter this afternoon and Aunt Charlotte.

Hope you will like the photo of Mom taken on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

No time for more now so goodbye for this week.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It is 2.30 p.m. and I am only now beginning to do my letter. I must post by 5 p.m. if Douglas is to have his letter by Friday, the day he always goes into town. So I must be brief. It will be Evelyn's birthday on Friday. We wish her very many happy returns of the day. I guess she will be feeling rather sad as Rex has been on his vacation leave and most likely by this time he is on his way north. He feels he is very lucky to be drafted up so soon. As soon as we know his full rank and company, will let you all know as he will sure to want letters from all and sundry. He wrote asking for some nux vomica as a preventative against sea sickness. Of course I sent him two bottles.

Mom was not feeling at all well on Sunday. She did not go out at all so on Monday I got Dr Scholtz down and he overhauled her. Could not find anything wrong but suggested a tonic. Her heart and lungs are quite sound. Her blood pressure and heart were those of a younger girl. Some years ago he said there was a spot on her lungs but no trace of such now. The tonic seems to be doing her good. We told him we were thinking of visiting Uitenhage instead of Joe and family coming to us for Easter. So we are trying to arrange to go next Thursday, if possible. If we find it too hot or unsuitable, we can return. Aunt Emmie would also like to go there as she is getting nervous in Cape Town. The winters in Cape Town do not agree with her either. It would be nice if we could meet there. I have been wanting to see her for a long time. We shall see what happens. It was her 76<sup>th</sup> birthday on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Last evening 10.30 p.m. Lilly Trollip arrived on a short visit to see her Aunt Charlotte. Mom stayed with her at Aliwal North a couple of years ago when we went to the Mayoral Congress. We have not let the house so shall just lock it up as we have done before.

We hear that Freda has been able to secure a house in Kimberley and there is someone in prospect to look after the farm. Mary came over from Graaff Reinet for a couple of days at the weekend and returned on Sunday afternoon. Her plans are still unsettled.

A Mr and Mrs Thompson, whom we new at Observatory, have been on a visit to Cradock. We used to sit just behind them in Church at Observatory. He has been on the sick list for three months and knows Joe. He hopes we may settle in Uitenhage. They have been down to see us a few times.

We must see if we can send each family a basket of grapes before we leave. They are ripening fast now that we have had some rain. We sent Grace a small basketful the other day and they arrived safely. Our figs are finished for the time being. We have been sending a basket of fruit to the station every morning for the soldiers and they have enjoyed them immensely.

Joyce and Raymond arrived back on Saturday evening. They both look very well and have enjoyed their two months holiday at Cape Town. Joyce says she finds Aunt Eliza better than when she left and is able to help herself more than formerly. We have had showers on nine days this month measuring about an inch and quarter. The heat has been very trying but we have managed to stand it. The nights have been very close.

Had a postcard from Rev Legg the last week. He is still confined to bed but hopes to go to Potgietersrus soon for a rest at his daughter's. Lily Trollip is returning to Aliwal on Friday night. Edith writes from East London that she has not found any suitable employment yet.

Letter from Douglas this a.m. says they have had good rains whilst he and Evelyn took Rex back to camp by car. He says Arthur is getting anxious to enlist too. It will be hard for Douglas if they are both away from the farm.

You had better post here as usual next week. It is possible we may not be able to get away as quickly as intended. Joe's address is 16 Mill Street, Uitenhage.

Grace reports colds prevalent in the home, Ted, Pam and herself affected. Baby Charles got in the way of a tennis racquet and cut his lip poor little chap. Joe and Blodwen hope we will go to them. There is a neighbour who has a room we could have.

Love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Unless anything unforeseen happens, we look to leave for Uitenhage tomorrow night, arriving there on Friday morning. We have not decided how long we will stay, that will depend on how the climate affects us – some say they expect we shall be back in a week or so as they are sure it is much hotter there than Cradock. We shall wait and see. Blodwen has arranged for us to sleep at their next door neighbour's house. They have a front room available. This will be very handy. We shall be able to see more of Joe and Blodwen in this way. Joe says the staff now have to do guard duty at night – four hours on and two hours off. This will be hard on him as he has to work hard during the day. I suppose it will be two or three nights per week for each man. It was so hot one day that the men knocked off work at lunch time.

We have had two visits during the week from Vryburg people. The first was a young man, Niemand, who worked for me in the printing works. He and his family – seven all told – were on their way to a job in Adelaide. I gave him a basket of grapes for the journey. Reg will remember the man. He was pleased to see me. Mom was resting at the time. The other visitor was old Mrs Johnson who has recently been admitted to the old people's home. She is very deaf and was able to tell us about a good many of the old folk. She used to attend the Coloured Church – she is Scottish. One of the Toc H ladies brought her along. Lily Trollip returned to Aliwal North on Friday night. Aunt Charlotte spent the day here with her on Thursday and seemed to enjoy herself. I am glad to say that I have distributed all the photos etc that she wanted sent to her relations in different parts of the country. This will save a lot of trouble later on. We are sorry that we shall just miss seeing Cyril Brown, Ruth's cousin. He is leaving Cape Town on holiday and after visiting Port Elizabeth and Somerset East, he was coming here. Perhaps we shall be able to see him in Port Elizabeth.

I had a long and interesting letter from one of the Botha House residents, Ben Theron, who is up north. We exchanged Xmas cards ever since we left Cape Town and I wrote to him as well and sent him some duplicate snaps I had of some of our picnics. He was very pleased to have them.

When I weighed myself, as I do every month, I find I have dropped four pounds in a month. I shall be a feather weight if I keep on at this rate. 140½ lbs. Mom seems much better since she has been taking doctor's medicine. We are taking a spare bottle with us.

Mary had some excitement going back to Graaff Reinet last Sunday week. We saw that there was a storm brewing in the west when she left. Two young men were with her in the car. At one causeway, the water was over the top and trees etc lying on it. A car had got stuck and was empty – the travellers having gone to get assistance. However, they got through alright. They had to cross two rivers.

Aunt Emmie is not coming to Uitenhage at present. If we decided to live there, we think it is possible she might do so. She is expecting that if the war situation gets worse, that women and children may have to be evacuated from Cape Town. We hope the boxes of grapes we sent to each home during the week have arrived safely and given some pleasure and no pains.

We hear that Eric and Freda have secured a furnished house in Kimberley so we assume that Freda will take up nursing again. It will be nice for the family to be altogether once more. There is no word of Eric going north at present. We have not heard if Rex has actually gone north. It seems strange that he should be sent so soon after such a short period of training. He is in the mechanical section.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> of this month, Denis comes of age. We are all, I am sure, very proud of him. He is the only one who has not had the loving care and affection of a father. How proud Harold would have been of him. All praise to Ruth for the way she has worked and brought him up so splendidly. I should like all of you to write to him – that is the least you can do. Don't forget now.

Rev Weavers has intimated that he may be leaving at the end of the year. Either Uitenhage or Kroonstad may have him but he thinks he will accept an invitation to Uitenhage. I forgot to say Denis has been elected senior representative on the Students Council.

:Love to all, Dad

L6 Mills Street, Uitenhage  
as Wednesday March 11<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Here we are, we arrived on Friday morning. We did not leave Cradock station until about five minutes to twelve at night – about two hours late. However, we were the right time on arrival. Blodwen had arranged for us to sleep next door, which is very convenient. The room is, of course, much smaller than our Cradock bedroom but is quite comfortable. We have the use of the bathroom etc. The gentleman also works on the railway, they have no children. Mrs Atkins, recognised us as having stayed at the same hotel in East London some year or two ago.

So far we have not had any rain but it poured in torrents before we left home. We are glad to say that so far we have not come across any mosquitoes, not that we want them. The weather has also been kind to us. It is hot of course but I do not know that it is hotter than Cradock. It is more humid but it being a lower altitude, walking is easier.

Joe is working very hard, his hours are from seven a.m. to twelve and one to 7.45 with only an hour for dinner. He takes a bottle of milk and a few sandwiches. He is very tired when he comes home. Of course he has breakfast before he goes. He sees very little of the children. They are seldom up before he goes and Roy and Merle do not come home from school until two. Then they have their homework to do. They are working overtime each night except Saturdays. It is really too much. I am glad to say they have stopped having to do sentry work as well. That was really too much.

I am very glad Joe has the motor so that he can get out for fresh air at the weekends. He is very interested, as you all know, in his cine photography. One evening he had the neighbour in to see the Golden Wedding views as well as the ones taken at Vryburg. We had not seen these before. We are going on Thursday evening to one of their club meetings where they show their films.

I am sorry to say Mom has not been at all well since we arrived. It seems that since she has been taking doctor's medicine, her tummy has been upset. So on Monday evening, I got a lady doctor to examine her and she can find nothing seriously wrong except a slight irritation in the bowel for which she has prescribed medicine which I hope will set her right. The lady, Dr Ruth Hull, gave her a good overhauling and confirmed Dr Scholtz' report that her heart and lungs are quite sound. She is coming again to see how she is getting on. We all hope that there will not be any further trouble.

I went to service on Sunday and heard Rev Piper. He was married again last December. He is living in Port Elizabeth.

I am sorry I made a mistake last week regarding the date of Denis' birthday. He will be 21 on the 21<sup>st</sup> March and I hope you all will write to him. Ruth writes that he has been elected head student of the whole college of 500 students. This is the greatest honour that a student can aspire to.

We are glad that the grapes we sent round have been appreciated but Dot says their box had been opened and it is not worthwhile repeating the experiment. I was afraid that the boxes would be tampered with.

I expect your letters will be late in arriving this week and perhaps mine will be late in reaching you so I am posting this, this Tuesday evening.

Joe took us all by car on Sunday afternoon to Humewood and we watched the sea for a while. We must go to town some day. I want Mom to have her eyes tested so that she can enjoy reading more than she does at present.

The children have been very interested in watching this typing. Please excuse all mistakes.

Much love to each and all from all here,

Dad

16 Mills Street, Uitenhage  
as Wednesday March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It is only Monday morning but I am writing this early in the week as we do not know what may be before us any time. I have already sent postcards to each of you saying that Mother has not been at all well since we came, in fact she was not well as you know, before we left and doctor Scholtz thought she change would do us both good. Unfortunately it has not turned out so, and she gradually got worse so that on Friday, I think it was, I got a lady doctor to come and overhaul her. Her heart and lungs are quite sound but there is a certain amount of inflammation in the bowel. She prescribed a washout which was done by the district nurse on Saturday afternoon. This brought away a great deal of stuff but left her very weak. Mom continued to vomit and her stomach was still upset. Her one desire is to get home as soon as possible. Doctor came again on Sunday afternoon but did not approve of our leaving that night by train as her pulse was very low and she was naturally very weak. It was considered desirable that she should have someone to travel with her besides myself as Mom says I am no good at nursing. So I phoned to Mary at Graaff Reinet, thinking she would be going back to Cradock before taking up her appointment at a Native Hospital near Louis Trichardt, beyond Potgietersrus. Mary had left her case in Graaff Reinet but the lady who answered the phone promised to phone to her and I asked that she should wire me this morning if she could or could not come. Her reply came a few minutes ago from Alice Biggs saying Mary was indisposed and could not come. Mom is certainly much better this morning but far from normal. I expect the doctor will come again today and she will then decide if she considers her fit to travel. When we do return, we shall probably go by the night train arriving about seven the next morning. Blodwen has been very good in cooking all sorts of soft foods, for Mom must not have any solids. Mom has been worrying about the idea of living in Uitenhage but that is quite out of the question now and will not be referred to so far as I am concerned.

So far did I get yesterday. It is now Tuesday after dinner and a good deal has happened since the foregoing was typed. Mom did not improve during the morning, so I phoned doctor as Mom had suggested she should go to hospital to which she (doctor) quite approved and said she thought so from the start but did not like to put it forward, thinking Mother would not like it. She made all the arrangements and I took her by taxi with Blodwen as well. She has a semi-private ward and is now very comfortable. She was sick directly she got there. Joe and I went up in the evening and I have seen her twice this morning and in a few minutes am going again so as to get the latest report of her. She has had a fairly good night and had not vomited again. Doctor had not seen her by 11.30.

It is now Wednesday morning 18th. Doctor has not seen Mom when I saw her at 11.30 so I went into town to do some shopping for her and went up again later in the afternoon. Doctor was satisfied with her condition and will be lettering her eat some food gradually. She is quite comfortable and we are allowed to see her any time. There is another lady in the same ward. Joe was not working overtime last evening and will not do so for the present as he has a nasty cold and is suffering with some pains in his back. He is better this morning. We are expecting Blodwen's sister and Mr Merrifield out this evening. They looked in for a few minutes one afternoon. We have only been into Port Elizabeth once – the first Sunday after we arrived. Then one of the tyres got punctured and I am afraid is spoilt. Mom has done a lot of sewing and mending but of course since she has been so ill, she has not been able to do anything in that way.

A letter came from Mary yesterday saying she is looking to leave Cradock about April 8<sup>th</sup> after she has been to Grahamstown and Commadagga. I have posted cards to each of you as often as I can but I fear they have been somewhat mixed up as I do nine of them at the same time and they have been done under difficulties. As I am now writing, Blodwen is away at the hospital as a relation of her servant has to undergo a serious operation and she promised to be with her. She will see Mom at the same time. Trevor is sitting by me and is as good as gold. Roy and Merle are of course at school and will not be home before two p.m. Joe comes to dinner at noon and is back at work by two. He is as thin as ever, only weights 130 lbs. I find I have gone down to 140. The

hospital is about twenty minutes slow walk from here and all up hill but I take it slowly. I can walk easier here than in Cradock owing to the lower altitude.

Mary suggests that when Mom is better and able to travel, we should continue our holiday and go as far as Humansdorp or even Mossel Bay. We are not making any plans until she is quite well. Perhaps before I have finished my letter, I shall be able to say something about our future plans.

Mom has not been able to go to church since we have been here. I went on Sunday morning and heard the President of the Local Preachers' Association – a lady – Miss Powell preach. She is evidently a lady with a degree as she wore her cap and gown. The organist, also a lady, wore a cap and gown. The sermon was quite good but she spoke too quickly to my way of thinking. The previous Sunday Rev Piper took the services. We were his friends when he came to Cradock as a young man. He is on the retired list now.

Saturday afternoon Joe took me to the bowling green where he took a few moving pictures of the players. He also took me through the native location, in which I am interested. The Location Inspector and Chairman of the Location Committee was with us. A couple of natives were fighting but they did not seem to take much notice of the Inspector who tried to stop them. There was a strong smell of liquor about the place. They have not a municipal beer hall. I also looked in at the Town Council meeting for a few minutes one evening to see what I could learn. I was not greatly impressed. Blodwen also attended and stayed the whole evening. She is very interested in the Joint Council of Europeans and Bantu and reports on the meetings and also writes to the local paper. Some day she hopes to be elected on the Town Council. I tell her that her children need her first attention.

We had a card from Aunt Jessie yesterday who had heard through Mr Weavers that Mom was not well. I must write to her today. By the way, Mr Weavers has been invited to come to Uitenhage as minister in January next. He has accepted, subject to the approval of Conference.

Grace writes hoping we shall go to them before the spring. They have had nice rains and the country is looking grand she says.

Letters are only delivered here about dinner time so I must wait to see what comes later on. As soon as Blodwen returns from the hospital, I will go and see Mom.

After dinner. I saw Mom for a few minutes. She is feeling very empty, she had a little toast for breakfast and also liquid paraffin. She is certainly improving but it seems to me it will be some days before she is out of hospital. Shall go up again later when Joe comes home. Can then go by car.

We are expecting Masie and husband this evening. Dare say she will go and see Mom.

We have had very little rain since we have been here. Grace reports that the army worm is in the neighbourhood. Not letters from any of the others of the family. No doubt they will come tomorrow. Hope so. Do not be anxious if you do not hear from me every day. I will keep you informed as often as necessary. I do hope Mom will soon be quite well again. Lots of love to each and all,

Yours lovingly,  
Dad

The Palmerston, Port Elizabeth  
Tuesday March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It seems almost unnecessary to write this week as I have sent you a number of postcards giving particulars regarding Mom's illness but you will, I suppose, be wanting to know how we are getting on so far. I had hoped to attend Friends meeting on Sunday morning in Port Elizabeth but Mom was still in bed in the hospital and I did not care to leave her. Rev Flowerday was taking the service in the Methodist Church here – the resident minister, Rev Rheed Marsh, being away on holiday. Mr Flowerday was resident in Cradock at the time of Uncle James' death and was also resident in Kimberley during the time Joe was living there. He has always been a great friend of the family. He has retired from the active work now but owing to the shortage of ministers, he often "supplies" for one and another. After service he came up with Joe and to see Mom and had a little service at her bedside. The doctor was just leaving the hospital as we entered and said Mom could leave the next day and Joe could take her for a little spin in the afternoon. This we did and she was none the worse for it. I went alone to service in the evening. Joe stayed home to help Blodwen with the children as she was not feeling too well and Trevor seemed to be sickening for a cold. Monday morning I was busy packing and doing a little shopping. Then I brought Mom to Mills Street for our last meal with Joe and Blodwen and left by 2.5 p.m. train for here. In order to avoid the awkward wait and changing of trains at Swartkops Junction, we decided to come here and spend a couple of days – which is the only chance of seeing the sea – and take the fast train on Thursday afternoon which only stops twice between here and Cradock. We are due there a little after nine p.m. The journey used to take twelve hours. Mom rested most of the afternoon whilst I called on the Blunsoms at their office and also Honor Biggs who also works in the same building. She was out but a member of her staff – a Czech girl – gave me tea and seemed very interested in hearing about the early days in South Africa. She has only been in the country a couple of years, speaks English very well and Honor says she is most capable in her work. Honor came and spent the evening with us after dinner and is coming again this afternoon and will stay to dinner here. She, like Mary, is a vegetarian. We have got in touch with Blodwen's sister, Masie, and she is coming to see us this afternoon. It is very blowy here so we have not been to Humewood and so perhaps we shall not see the sea. However, we went on to the roof of the highest building in Port Elizabeth this morning but it was too windy to enjoy the view for more than a few moments. Port Elizabeth is stated to be the second windiest place in the world. Give me East London any day to this. During the late evening – after we had gone to bed – we heard some cannon shots and Mom wanted to get dressed at once fearing it was the Japs bombing the town. Of course it was our guns practising.

I am sorry to say I have developed a nasty cold in my head, nose running and my voice nearly gone. It seems to have been an unfortunate holiday in every respect and makes me doubtful if we will attempt another. Have had a good rest since lunch and will post this tonight. Next week there are two wedding anniversaries – Dot and Reg and Joe and Blodwen, also David's birthday.

Uncle James and Aunt Letty would have celebrated their Diamond Wedding on the 8<sup>th</sup>. We hope there will be a nice batch of letters for us when we get home on Thursday night. Thanks to those who have written whilst we have been away. Shall try to answer same when we are settled down again. We have decided to get our mid-day meal out in future and so save some cooking and worry. We hope to hear how Denis' birthday party went off. Hope all of you wrote to him. I don't think I shall write again until I get home. Mom has not been able to write any letters since we left Cradock.

Lots of love to each and all from us both,  
Dad



34 Dundas Street, Craddock  
Saturday March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1942

May dear All,

I am using a different typewriter the reason for which I shall explain presently. I am thankful that I am alive to tell the tale. We left Port Elizabeth on Thursday afternoon (2.15) and arrived at Craddock station at 5.15 p.m. The train was a long one with two engines and pulled up at an island platform. Our compartment was half way up to the goods shed, far beyond the end of the platform. It was dark and we alighted from the wrong side, between the rails. The taxi man and a military man, a fellow passenger, helped us down and placed our luggage on the ground. Without any warning, a train from the opposite direction dashed past, knocking my typewriter case and bundle of rugs and lunch basket as it passed. It was a miracle that no one was struck by the train. I think I was the nearest, the taxi man pulling me back at the moment. I have seen the Station Master and he says I can send in a claim but it is doubtful if the Railway will pay. I am using a Corona machine which Mr Thomas has lent me. As you see, I am not used to it although I had a "Corona" years ago.

The house had not been opened since we left on the night of 5<sup>th</sup> and it does not seem very dirty. We went straight to bed, having had some food on the train. Mom had stood the journey fairly well, was lying down most of the way but during the night, her old trouble came on again and all day yesterday she was ill. Unfortunately the maid did not turn up but sent word that her baby was ill. I fully intended sending for doctor to see if she could not go to hospital again but fortunately the girl arrived this morning at about eight and although Mom was up and down a good deal during the night, she is certainly easier this afternoon. Our neighbour, Mrs Armstrong and Joy helped a good deal and Miss Metcalf sent in some stewed apples and blancmange. About five this morning I started making some barley water and what with soda water, Bovril etc. she is getting better. I have seen Mrs Derecourt about having our midday meal at her boarding house from tomorrow and hope it will be a success.

I must now go back to our leaving Uitenhage. I fetched Mom out of hospital on Monday and had lunch with Joe and Blodwen – the children were not home from school. Then we made a stupid mistake in getting out of the train at North End station. We did not notice the name up and as all the other passengers were getting out, we naturally thought it was Port Elizabeth. So we had to get a taxi to take us into town. Tuesday was very windy so we did not do anything except go to Mr Merrifield's office. He was out but we got permission to go on the roof of the building which is the highest in Port Elizabeth. We had a good view of the bay but it was too unpleasant to stay more than a few moments. Wednesday was a perfect day so we went to Humewood in the morning and in the afternoon visited the war exhibition and the snake park. Mom had never seen this and was quite interested. The museum is on the same site. Here I introduced myself to the curator, a Mr Pringle, with whom I had correspondence regarding an old wooden clock, 300 years old. He asked if we were related to Douglas Butler of Vryburg, whom he knew very well and often visited the farm. His father lives near Douglas and we had met him. We were also very interested in seeing the splendid collection of horns which Clive Halse had given to the museum. They have a nice photo of Olive in one of the rooms. They also have a large stone which Mr Halse got me to send to the museum and it is called the elephant stone. It is quite black and is said to have been used by wild game for years as a rubbing post. I must write to Mrs Halse about it. In the afternoon Mr and Mrs Merrifield called for us and took us for a nice spin in their car to Schoormakerskop. We saw the wild monkeys along the road which come to the cars to be fed. They jump onto the cars and although quite free to roam in the bushes seem tame. There must be hundreds of them there. The same evening we went with the Merrifields to hear the Cantata, The Holy City, in the Methodist Church. It is now five p.m. so I must hurry to post. Mom is resting and I hope it will not be necessary to call in doctor. I know you all will be anxious to know how we are.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I have not got used to this borrowed typewrite and do not know how I shall get on with my letter. I have sent in a claim for a new Remington, as the man who overhauled the damaged one considers it will never give good service if it is repaired. I suppose it will be some weeks before the matter is settled. No more typewriters are being made now I am told owing to the war. However we shall see.

I am glad to say Mom continues to make progress. There has been no return of the trouble but she still has to get up her strength. We went to service twice on Sunday – special day of prayer - there were good congregations. We hired a taxi and went to see Uncle Walter and Olive before service thinking Olive might like to go with us but she felt she could not leave her father. Miss Stoops very kindly gave us a lift back from church. This she has done frequently. We have also been up to see Aunt Eliza and Joyce. They are all well but are having trouble with servants changing. It is most fortunate that Joyce is there.

The latest news from Aunt Emmie is that her heart specialist, who examined her about 18 months ago, now says that there is such an improvement in her condition that he thinks she may safely go and stay with Muriel in Maritzburg. She is even contemplating paying Cradock and Grahamstown visits on the way. We shall be very glad to see her. She does not want to spend another winter in Cape Town besides which, there is the possibility of old people and children having to evacuate if the Japs should threaten the Union.

Joe is going to camp at Walmer over the week and Blodwen was looking to come to us as she dreads sleeping alone. If Joe should be called up for active service, some plan will no doubt be made. They have decided not to buy the house which they were after. Roy and Merle are to take music lessons soon. They both seem very musical. They take after their mother of course.

Douglas writes that Rex is under two hours notice to be off but the notice does not come. He is in the engineering section. Arthur is wanting to go but realises that he is doing important service in farming. Douglas is doing his bit in the local defence service. They have had good rains and are always kept hard at work. Ruth writes that they would have liked us to go to see Denis capped and gowned at the graduation service which takes place tomorrow. We should have liked to have gone but it is not possible this time. Denis is joining up this month, if possible in the artillery but his eyes may be a difficulty. We are glad to hear that his party and dance were so much enjoyed. I hope I am not giving away any secrets but we hear there is a young lady in the picture. Ruth and John are spending the weekend in Somerset West. Wish they would come on here. I am glad all of you remembered Denis on his birthday. Dot writes that Norman has contracted scarlet fever. They cannot make out where he has picked it up. We are glad to hear that Rev and Mrs Legg are so much better that they have returned to his work. Grace in recent letters says that Ted has been medically examined for the signalling brigade but so far as we know, nothing has happened. The new national road bridge over the river is finished but not open yet. Jean is getting on nicely with her music.

Aunt Jessie and Gervase came in for the evening service on Sunday and had supper with us. Later. Letters from Douglas, Evelyn and Grace to hand. Douglas and Evelyn had gone to Kimberley to fetch the children home for the short holidays. All were well. Rex still at Zonderwater. They want us to go to them as it is nice and cool and the country is looking so nice and green. We certainly went a month too soon to Uitenhage. We must think it over. I do want to see you and your homes again but when is the question. Glad to hear June Short is better and that Mrs Hudson Sr. is home again from East London. Grace says Harold is hiking with some other scouts for a few days. The children were excited recently when an aeroplane crashed on a neighbouring plot, fortunately no one was hurt. Mom weighs 158. She was 170 when in East London. I am down to 140. This is about 19 lbs lighter than East London.

We started having our mid-day meal at Mrs Derecourt's on Monday. She gives a liberal helping of everything. Goodbye, lots of love, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I am still using the borrowed Corona machine so I hope you will excuse all mistakes. The Railway Administration have written saying my claim will receive special consideration and shall hear from them again in due course. So we must wait and see what is going to happen. Mary says I must have a good machine so that I can see the letters easily. Mary returned from her wanderings last evening and is spending a couple of days with Ernest. She leaves for Johannesburg and Pretoria on Thursday night and leaves Pretoria for Donald Fraser Hospital, Sibisa, Northern Transvaal. Please make a note of her address. She passes Reg and Dot about 5 am on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Mary is looking better but thinner. She says she is quite well. We shall all miss her very much indeed. She has been a ministering angel to many in Cradock and district.

I am glad to say Mom is better than she was last week but is not up to concert pitch yet. Metcalfe offered her a seat to the Baroda fete yesterday but did not care to leave me at home.

Our garden boy has not turned up to work this week, I suppose it is because I told him he need only come three days a week in future. He seems to have done very little work whilst we were away except to let the weeds grow. Our maid will also be leaving at the end of the month as her husband has work in Bedford. Her mother, who does the washing, will also be going so this means more changes for us.

Did I tell you that our old friend, Mrs Dersley, died last week? Her husband died a few months ago. They were a very nice old couple. Had celebrated their Diamond Wedding. Our neighbour, Mr Garlake, was taken seriously ill last week and was removed to Port Elizabeth Nursing Home. He is suffering from an abscess on the spine. He is partially paralysed and there is no hope for his recovery we are told. He is a younger man than I and has never had any serious illness. His family are all grown up. He is a partner of Mr Metcalf's. He is also related to Joyce by marriage.

Wednesday morning. It is now so dark at six a.m. that I am taking an extra half hour in bed. This morning is the coldest we have had so far. I expect frost about the 15<sup>th</sup>. The vines and Virginian creepers are shedding their leaves. Our garden boy has not turned up to work this week. Suppose he hasn't owing to last Monday being a holiday. I suppose we shall not get any letters from you before post time. Hope little Norman is getting over his attack of scarlet fever. They all seem to have colds at Uitenhage. Have not heard how Joe got on at camp.

There was a very nice paragraph in the Eastern Province Herald of April 1<sup>st</sup> referring to Denis' coming of age. I am enclosing same in Grace's letter and she can send it round.

News has just come in that Mr Garlake died last night and the funeral is to be here tomorrow afternoon at 4. Poor Mr Metcalf is very much cut up.

A nice letter from my old friend, Mr Bull, who used to visit us in Vryburg. He is living at Fish Hoek now and is back in the Post Office work although he retired some years ago.

Lots of love to you all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup> 1942

My dear All,

The typewriter which Mr Thomas kindly lent me has been sold and Ernest has kindly lent me another machine which is quite different in some of its workings and I am experiencing some difficulty in manipulating it but will try and do my best. So far I have not heard anything further from the Railways about my claim.

I found it very difficult last week to concentrate on writing. The death of our neighbour, the departure of Mary etc. put me off my stroke. This week does not seem to be much easier. Monday I had eight Council meetings-committees to attend and ended up with a concert by the Music Club in the Hall. The concert was given by a Welshman, Llewellyn, a member of the R.A.F. who spends any leave or holiday in giving song recitals. It was an excellent performance. Mr Field is a member of the Society of Friends and is a lecturer at Rhodes. He and his daughter came to see us on Sunday. They have started a Friends meeting in Grahamstown now. He was in Port Elizabeth before and came to see me when in hospital. His daughter knows Denis.

I wonder if any of you remembered that it was Harold and Ruth's wedding anniversary on 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr McCaig, formerly of Vryburg, is in hospital here. His father was road inspector many years ago here and on one occasion, crossing Jakens sluit, he was washed down into the Fish River. This man's younger brother was drowned. I remember the occasion.

We are glad to hear that Norman is getting better of his attack of scarlet fever but we are very sorry for her neighbours, the Watts family. Their son has been treated for malaria instead of enteric and has been very ill. Their neighbours on the other side are leaving Potgietersrus, having retired from the bank. The thought struck me how nice it would be for us if we could occupy the house and so be next door to one of our own family.

Grace says they are putting down another borehole on the plot. No water, no pay. Hope it will be successful. Aunt Eliza paid us a visit last week, the first since the Golden Wedding. I was sorry I was out at the time. Needless to say I am experiencing considerable difficulty in getting the hang of this machine. The paper keeps on catching and tearing. I wish the Railway would let me know what they are going to do about my claim.

Joe seems to have had a good time at camp. He was allowed to take a number of cine snaps. Douglas says a wire came from Rex saying he was leaving shortly but apparently he has not gone yet. They have had good rains in Vryburg district and prospects seem good. He has struck good water on one of his farms at 94 feet. All the family, except Cicely, are taller than Evelyn and she is growing fast. Aunt Emmie is still looking forward to going to Maritzburg for the winter. May call here on the way.

I had a very full day on Monday, only eight meetings to attend.

Later. Letter from Grace says that the driller has struck hard rock and given up the job. Another disappointment for them.

We are going to a war effort fete this afternoon and as the machine is not working to my satisfaction, I will close and hope for better success next time. Hope to hear from Dot tomorrow. Had a postcard from Mary at Bloemfontein. She spoke to Grace from Kroonstad station.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I do not know how I am going to manage with this typewriter this week but I have found out some of its workings and hope for better results. I am still waiting on word from the Railway about compensation for the broken machine. On looking over my last week's letter, I find I did not make it clear who Mr Field was. He played the accompaniments for the singer and also played a few pianoforte solos.

On Monday morning Denis passed through by the early train and I was glad to see him looking so well. He expects to be in Potchefstroom for about six months. If he gets a long weekend leave, he hopes to be able to take a run up to Douglas. Joe writes that volunteers were called for three months sea service. He does not say he volunteered but only two from his workshop were granted leave. The proposed purchase of a house he took me to see has fallen through. Grace reports that the new bridge on the National road has been opened and saves them some distance in getting to town and incidentally saves some petrol. Dot saw Mary at five a.m. on Wednesday but only had a few minutes conversation. We have not heard from her yet after her arrival at Sibesa. Evelyn has sent us a new snap of the family and the dog. They all look very happy.

Wednesday morning. It seems as though we are going through a time of accidents. Last Thursday I had occasion to call on the Postmaster in his office and proceeded to take a seat but missed the chair and flopped onto the floor. Fortunately I was not seriously injured but am still feeling the effects slightly. I am able to walk and get about but it might have caused more inconvenience. On Friday the Anglican minister, Rev Mackenzie was buried, the Bishop and a number of other ministers taking part. He has been ill for some months. Last Wednesday a large fete was held in the Show Ground in aid of war funds. Between £6 & £400 was raised. On Monday evening, we went to a lecture on British Israel and the war situation. It was most interesting and reassuring that the Bible prophecies are all being fulfilled according to God's plan. If you have a chance of hearing Mr Price, the lecturer, be sure and do so. By the way, he tells me that Rev Heath, formerly of Vryburg, is married for the third time and is the Presbyterian minister in Maritzburg.

I had a long letter from my old typist at the YMCA recently. Her husband has had to give up his farm in the Barkly East district. They are now working in a bus concern in the Transvaal and appear to be doing very well. Another old friend of our Vryburg days, Mr Bull, sent me a long letter. He is again working in the Post Office. He retired some years ago in Kimberley and have always been friends. Mrs Halse was 80 last Sunday. We sent her a Golden greeting. Lynne motored the Short family to Pretoria at Easter. The children were thrilled, especially with what they saw at the zoo. Kingsley and Cecily are very happy at school. Kingsley is a rugby enthusiast. Later. Grace writes that Jean has come first in her exam last quarter. Pam ?<sup>th</sup>, Harold 3<sup>rd</sup> and David 1<sup>st</sup>. They have had a visit from Ernest Saunders and family. They have planted some Napier fodder grass and some wonder oats that Douglas and I sent them. It may help them with winter feed. I have been invited to open the autumn flower show this afternoon in the Town Hall so must get busy and prepare something to say. I hope this letter will be readable. I am not satisfied in losing so much space in the margins each side. I am getting more used to the machine. If I cannot get a new typewriter, I may give up writing dear alls and just send a postcard each week.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I am still struggling with the borrowed typewriter and hope to do better than last week. We shall see. Have not heard anything from the Railways about my claim, so hope they are seriously thinking about it.

Monday was another red letter day for me. No accident this time but it commemorated the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of leaving London for Cradock. I well remember the day. How my brothers stood on the quay waving their umbrellas with two handkerchiefs tied to them so as to distinguish them from the rest of the crowd. It was a big adventure in those days to come to South Africa. I have not regretted it. We celebrated the event by having our first fire in the dining room. It turned very cold yesterday and will be cold again tonight (Tuesday).

I have sent each of you a copy of last Saturday's Midland News containing a reference to Uncle Walter's 87th anniversary. I suggest you cut same out and keep it with your copy of the family tree. I believe the Colletts hold a world record for longevity. Uncle Walter is at present with his daughter, Mildred, in the Graaff Reinet district whilst Olive has gone to Pretoria for three weeks holiday, which she well deserves.

Dorothy has kindly sent us a parcel of avocado pears. They arrived in first class condition and are greatly appreciated. They are very fine specimens but I do not know if they were grown in her garden. Dorothy and Grace have both sent us string bags. Reg had made a very nice handle out of three ply wood which makes it easy for carrying. Grace's too is very nice and as most shops will not deliver parcels, we shall find both useful.

We had an interesting letter from Mary this week. She finds plenty to do and is charmed with the scenery she has passed through. She was pleased to see Dot on the platform at Potgietersrus but they only had a few minutes in which to talk. She is starting a system of sending a dear all but so far has not used her typewriter. Douglas writes that they have not yet heard if Rex has evidently started for the north. They have had nice rains in Vryburg but are expecting frosts shortly. Uncle Owen and Aunt Kate and Beryl are in the district staying of course with their daughters. Reg's father has had a slight stroke and has been in hospital but seems to be getting better. Mike Mayers who has been on leave for some time has to return to duty in May. Douglas has had to go to Maritzburg on official business. Joe is complaining of a change in the weather. He still has to work overtime and Saturday afternoons as well. His films taken in camp are very good he says. He offers to send them up for us to see. Roy has also written a nice letter. Am glad to see that Vryburg has sent a United Party man to the Provincial Council in the recent election.

We are still getting our mid-day meal at the Derecourts. Mom wants us to send for them in future but that will mean a lot of extra work. However we will see. Our garden boy has left. He did not take to the idea of only working three days a week. We are sharing with Olive as she only wants her boy three days so we hope it will suit us both very well.

The flower show last week was quite a success. The entries not so numerous as last year but the exhibits were very good. We went to see a war film on Saturday afternoon. Uncle Norman and Aunt Gladys had supper with us and saw the same picture in the evening. All their three boys are still alright at the front. We are busy preparing for the Church centenary on the tenth and eleventh. There will be an article in the Outspan on the 8<sup>th</sup> on the matter.

Wednesday morning. There is not much room for more so will wait and see if any letters come before posting. Yes, letters from Grace and Dot are to hand.

Love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday May 6<sup>th</sup> 1942

My dear All,

I am still without any reply from the Railway regarding my claim for a new typewriter. I wish they would hurry up as I do not seem to be able to get along very well with this one. As I write, I am reminded that it is Dot's birthday today – Tuesday. Hope she has had a happy day and will be spared to all of us for many years to come. No doubt we shall hear in due course how the day was spent. We hope Norman was well enough for them all to enter into the rejoicing.

We are anxious to hear the result of Joe's visit to the eye specialist and also the ear man as he has been experiencing trouble in these respects. Blodwen says he has applied for a position as charge man at the Salt River works. If that should materialise, our family will be more scattered than ever. He says his cine snaps taken at the recent camp have turned out very well. We are hoping they may spend one of the long weekend holidays this month with us so that we can let our country cousins have the pleasure of seeing the Golden Wedding snaps as well.

The house next door to us has been sold for ? and the Eldriges have gone into a boarding house. We also hear that the house where Mary had her room has been sold for £1000. Mary left some of her furniture in the house so that will have to be removed.

We are having our dinners at home again. Mom did not like going out and as we have some vegetables still growing and more planted, so we are back in the old groove again. Fortunately our Ina has not left as her husband is back from Bedford. Olive is still away and we are having her garden boy three days a week and the other days he works in her garden. There are half a dozen large grapefruit on the tree near the summer house. They are not ripe yet. The pomegranates are about finished.

We hear that Ted is contemplating going in for a motorcycle. He bought the car he has been using whilst we were at Louis Botha House and drove it up to Kroonstad. He has had a lot of use out of it but I fear it is about due for the scrap heap now.

We are not quite free from disasters. This week a Pyrex dish which I had mended broke again while Mom was removing it from the electric oven and of course the contents fell on the floor. Another calamity is that Mom found the electroplate ring round the salad bowl that always stands on the sideboard has broken from the dish itself. This too I have mended but it is doubtful if it will hold. Uncle James and Aunt Letty gave us a set of this pattern as a wedding present. The biscuit barrel was broken some years ago but is still holding.

We expect to have a very busy week next week - the Centenary of the church and the Fish River Fete and a school concert by Rockland's pupils. Then a Mr Allen, M.P. writes that he intends visiting Cradock on Monday in connection with the Layman's' League. He and his wife were to stay with us but we have put him off as it will clash with the supper and meeting in connection with the Centenary.

Ruth has sent us such a nice large photo of Denis in his college gown. We shall have it framed. At present he is at Roberts Heights for a month.

We went to an exhibition in the Town Hall this Tuesday morning of woollen garments made by local ladies for seamen from Cradock grown sheep and spun and weaved by the ladies. It was quite interesting watching them working.

We are now using Bush tea (six pence a pound) instead of ordinary tea at three shillings and nine pence a pound. We quite like it. For a long time now I have been taking tea without any milk and think it is better for my indigestion. Local dairies have raised the price of milk to three pence per pint as from the first of May. Meat has come down to eight pence per pound. Have any of you used powdered milk? I see it is recommended. It sold here at three and six pence a tin. On pound tin.

Love from Dad

45 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I wonder if you will notice any difference in my typing this week as the Railway has agreed to compensate me to the extent of £12 for the damage done to my old Remington. I am trying this machine this week which Mr Thomas has for sale. It is a new Zephyr Corona which sells at £13.10s so it only entails an outlay of 30/- extra which seems reasonable considering I only paid £10 for the Remington five years ago. Of course the prices for all classes of machines has gone up considerably owing to the war. The machine is lighter in weight and build than the Remington and I am anxious to see if it can stand up to the task of typing eight copies at the same time. This of course will depend largely upon the quality of the carbon paper that I use. It would be an added advantage if the machine would spell correctly but owing to my poor visibility, I am afraid that you will have to make allowance for errors in this respect. One thing I notice is the machine is much quieter in working than either of the others. Mom will no doubt appreciate this as when I am typing, it generally disturbs her. If you find the copy I send you rather faint, if you place a white sheet of paper behind the tissue, it will show it up plain. So far I am pleased with the machine but evidently shall have to use new carbon paper next week. The machine only weighs nine pounds and measures twelve inches square by three inches deep and will easily go into a suitcase.

It is Saturday afternoon and it is just as well that I am commencing my letter early as we have such a full week in front of us that it may be difficult to get time for writing.

We are glad to hear that Dot has such a happy time for her birthday. Norman and Allan are busy carpentering etc and both seem well. Denis Watts is making progress and the nurse was expected to leave shortly. The child has had a long illness through his being treated for malaria instead of pneumonia.

Ted has purchased a motorbike and already there has been an accident which might have been very serious. It appears that as he started off to the office, baby Charles, unknown of course to Ted, caught hold on some part of the machine and was dragged a considerable distance along the ground. Their dog was barking considerably alongside of Ted and he started to drive the dog home when he discovered baby. His little knees were badly scratched and of course he was very frightened and cried considerably in having his sores dressed. Happily no serious harm seems to have resulted.

Joe's house has probably, by this time, have been sold over their head but we have not heard what they are going to do. Houses are very scarce there as everywhere else these times. We are hoping they will come here for one of the long weekends this month. Joe was examined by Dr Stewart in Port Elizabeth and was fixed up with glasses the same day. He was X-rayed for his deafness but we have not heard the result.

We had a nice letter from Mary this week. She is using an old typewriter that my brother Joe gave her years ago. I wish I could type as well as she does. She is charmed with that part of the country, the scenery is very grand she says. Considering the hospital has not had a trained European in charge for such a long time, it is a great credit to those in charge that she finds things as good as they are.

We have not heard if Rex has actually gone north yet. Douglas has been to Maritzburg on meat business, have not heard how he got on.

We are experiencing winter conditions in earnest the last few days. We had 30 points of rain last night and expect to see snow on the mountains in the morning. The wind is biting. We hope it will be fine for the services tomorrow and the Fish River Fete next Thursday.

I hope to be able to send you some apples next week. Boxes are unobtainable so shall use bushel baskets where necessary. Please return them when empty or sooner. Perhaps we will put some vegetables at the bottom of the basket. Did I tell you we are using bush tea and quite like it. We have been advised to throw off the first water which removed some of the "sting". Our visitors also like it. We buy it here for 6d per pound. Eggs are 2/6 to 3/- a dozen. Butter 1/6 to 2/-.



Our boy only turned up twice this week which is not very satisfactory. We do not know when Olive is returning. She will not be here for the Fete. The ladies have provided a birthday cake for the centenary and Rev Weavers wanted Uncle Walter to be one of the two oldest Methodists in the Circuit to cut the first slice. Unfortunately he will be away. The other to cut the slice for the ladies is old Mrs Trollip who is 93, Ina Macleod's mother. Grannie Trollip, she is generally called.

Aunt Eliza has given me a letter addressed to her by Uncle James on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1890 on receipt of the news of my father's death. I was out at Fish River at the time with Mom. The news was a great shock to us. Uncle went to England for a visit shortly afterwards. I am sending the letter to Mary as she most likely would like to keep it.

One of those beautiful trees "carijong" which has grown so nicely by our side gate in the street was broken high up by the wind today. The Park Keeper thinks the tree will grow out alright but I have my doubts.

Monday morning, May 11<sup>th</sup>. I have just returned from the station to meet Mr Allen, M.P. of Johannesburg, who was going to spend the day here in connection with the Layman's League and to attend the Centenary Celebrations. He was not there so suppose I shall get a letter or wire explaining matters. It did not freeze last night but it is mighty fresh walking to and from the station at 7 a.m. Well the services yesterday were very successful. Mr Weavers in the morning gave excellent addresses and the attendance was larger than usual. The President was preaching in Middelburg in the morning and it was arranged that Mr Weavers should meet him half way between here and there. He was in very fine form at the evening service, taking for his text "will ye also go away" and Peter's reply "to whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life." There were more empty pews than I thought would be the case but it was a fine congregation and a wonderful address. This was followed by the communion service. After that, Mr Weavers took the President to a service in the location. So he must have been very tired after all those services and he is not a young man anymore.

Mom and I went to see Aunt Eliza in the afternoon. Am glad to say she is keeping wonderfully well but of course cannot get about much. She has had the sitting room colour washed and the outside walls done as well. The woodwork on the front stoep is to be painted. I do not know if this is specially in view of Aunt Emmie's anticipated visit. Joyce is keeping very well and Raymond also. Am glad to say she gets letters pretty regularly from Dudley who is safe so far. He has been in the fighting line but so far has escaped.

After service, we listened to Mr Churchill speaking from London. And what a wonderful speech it was. There was no fear as to the meaning of what he said and it is to be hoped the Germans will take it to heart. It was the best speech I think Churchill has ever made. It is to be sincerely hoped that the Germans will not use poison gas. It will be terrible if they do. The tide of the war has certainly turned in favour of the Allied nations.

Monday afternoon. Another stage in the festivities is over. The Mayor gave a semi-private lunch at the Victoria Hotel to about twenty or so, including most of the local ministers of different denominations and others. It was quite sociable. The only speeches were the Mayor's and Rev Allcock who simply exchanged greetings. The President is a humorous speaker. This was over about 2.30. The next function was afternoon tea to which I had invited all the office bearers of the church. We did not have it here as I did not want to put any more work on Mom so we went to the Café. It was quite informal. After cups of tea, the President gave some explanation as to the objects of the Layman's League, which briefly are to develop the interests and spiritual activities of the church. He pointed out the work must develop from within and as I had only invited the church officers to tea, the message had special application to those present. I hope something will eventuate. In addition to Rev Allcock, Rev Wellington of Healdton and Rev Barnes, the former minister, were also present and of course Mr Weavers.

It is now Tuesday morning and it is cold. I am glad to have my mittens on which I think Mary knitted for me a couple of years ago. There was frost again and it is cold work typing. Generally after a frost, we have a fine day.

Well, I must continue with the celebrations. The next function was the supper in the School Room. Ladies of the church had been working all day and the result was eminently satisfactory. Three of the Market long tables were arranged the length of the hall. These were attractively decorated with flowers in glass vases. White tablecloths, plates, cutlery etc were set for about 120 guests. The hall was lighted and presented a most attractive effect. The seating accommodation consisted for the most part of the Sunday School benches which were rather awkward for passing. Of course everything was served cold except tea and coffee. The eats consisted mostly of turkey, fowls and salads, I do not know how many were cut up. It was all arranged on dishes in the middle of the tables and everyone helped themselves. Waiters were thus dispensed with. Country friends helped with provisions as well as the towns people. Unfortunately the tables were not filled but I should estimate that about 70 attended. Of course tickets were sold beforehand and many who so bought did not come. There was heaps of stuff over which was sold afterwards. Everything was given so there will not be any loss. The ladies had worked very hard and well deserved the praise which was meted out to them. We lent some cutlery, vases, dishes etc. Quite a number of members of other churches came to the supper. Owing to the petrol restrictions and the fact that the Fish River Fete is on this week as well, only Aunt Jessie and Uncle Gervase came in for the supper and public meeting. Supper being over, social chat was indulged in until the public meeting in the church. We had hoped that the Church would have been filled as the meeting had been well advertised. Many of those who came to the supper evidently went home afterwards, not that they were dissatisfied but not interested. "Granny" Trollip was given a seat with the speakers inside the communion rail. The Mayor, Mr Cull, presided and discharged his duties very well. He belongs to the Anglican Church and his wife to the D.R. Church. He read most of his address and seemed to me rather nervous. There were four addresses besides the Mayors and a few hymns in between – and a collection – so the programme was somewhat lengthy, and very good. The note struck by the President and other speakers was that the world and the church were out of joint and would never be the same as it was before the war and we must be prepared to face new situations. Nevertheless there was no getting away from the fact that the old truths of the Bible were the only rock upon which to build. The Church – those who more or less nominally profess to belong to the Church – have departed from the old ways and have forsaken God, family worship and the commandments He laid down and we must get back again to Christ. Ask yourselves if this is not true.

The congregation was invited to adjourn back again into the Hall for a social hour where tea was served and letters from General Smuts and many absent friends, including our old friend Rev Hornabrook, were read. Some of them contained cheques as well as good wishes and congratulations. Old Mr Metcalf attended the public meeting and I walked home with him although he protested that he was alright and could manage quite well by himself. I returned to the Hall. Then came the cutting of the birthday cake. "Granny Trollip" representing the Collett clan, was entrusted to light the ten candles – one for each ten years – and Miss Jessie Webber representing one of the oldest families then distributed it. We got home in time for the late news service about quarter to eleven. Needless to say it is not often we are out as late as this. The financial results we do not know yet but from the social side it has been quite a successful celebration and I hope that more than anything else it will bring a spiritual refreshing.

Since breakfast I have written a good deal of this page on the back stoep where it is nice and bright and warm in the sun. It is still cool in the dining room. We are expecting Dora Armstrong and her sister, Mrs Arthur Roberts, to morning tea presently. They have been and gone so I can resume my letter.

A letter from Douglas this morning gives us Rex's address. Please make a note of it so that you can write and cheer him up.

No. 228907, Sapper R.D. Butler,  
c/o Staff Officer,  
S.A.E.C.-G.O.(A),  
U.D.F.M.E.F.,  
Army Post Office, Durban.

Douglas says he wrote four days out at sea and had not had to use Nux Vomica.

Douglas says he has been trying to get a portable typewriter for me but it will not be necessary as I think this one will do all that I require of it. I see some of the eight copies I am doing are rather indistinct so next week I will try to get some new carbon paper but like everything else, it is scarce and expensive. Douglas saw old Mrs Ambler in Pietermaritzburg. She was very well. He also tried to see Muriel but had not her address.

I do not think I have inflicted a four page letter on you before but I hope you will be interested in particulars regarding the Centenary. I hope to send each of you a souvenir of the article Rev Weavers and I wrote. I am waiting for the Midland News report to appear of the proceedings and shall probably send both together. Ernest says the full report will not be published until next week. They are not publishing the paper on Thursday as it is a holiday.

We are still looking to go to Fish River Fete on Thursday and hope to get some venison as we are cooking for ourselves again.

I have been cutting out white letters for Joe so that he can use them for making the titles to his cine films. We are still hoping that they will come up for a long weekend this month.

I have a Governor Generals Committee meeting to attend at five this afternoon so must go just now. Have a Council tender board meeting already this afternoon and so my time gets taken up. I am glad to be of some use somewhere, somehow, sometimes.

I hope you will like the new typing. The machine has not given me any trouble so far. I have asked for the old one to be returned to me.

Wednesday morning. The Railway have now replied that they are not returning the machine, they claim it as their property. Had a nice long letter from Jordaan who worked for me at Midland News. He has done very well for himself and is working now in Johannesburg, has about 40 men under him. Was never been happier in his life he says. His daughter, 21, has done wonderfully well in music.

No letter from Grace or Joe so far this week. Hope baby Charles has got over his accident reported last week. Dot says Mrs Watts' son is making some progress which we hope will continue. She had a happy birthday – with Xmas pudding as an extra. They have been inoculated for colds, hope it has the desired effect.

Dot says the nurse who was nursing Mrs Watts' child was Miss Lanham who nursed Uncle Herbert at Fish River.

I think I have done enough for this week. Hope you will be able to read it. Will try to get some new carbon paper for the next edition.

If the weather tomorrow is as nice as it has been today, it will be enjoyable at Fish River Fete. Hope they come up to their average of £180 odd.

Please excuse all mistakes.

Lots of love to all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It is Sunday afternoon and before resting for a while, I thought I would start my weekly epistle and I want to see what the new carbon paper is like. I hope it will give clearer results.

Last Wednesday evening we went to the Rockland's concert in the Town Hall – it was excellent from start to finish. About sixty children took part and no one needed prompting or correcting in their parts. It was about eleven before we got to bed. Thursday morning we were off to Fish River Fete with the Weavers. The weather was perfect, a slight breeze but no dust. There was crowds of visitors from Cradock and of course most of the farmers in the area were there. It seemed as though the quantity of meat – especially springbok, was less than usual, possibly on account of nearly all the guns and ammunition having been called in by the government. However their takings again amounted to £200. This is their 26<sup>th</sup> such fete on behalf of the church funds, their average contribution being £181. The cold lunch they provide for the visitors at 2/- a head has become famous. They had three or four sittings.

Saturday was the coldest day we have had. The wind was very uncomfortable. The maximum in the shade for the day was only 52 and the minimum for the 24 hours was 28. I do not remember ever the maximum being so low. I do not know whether the weather or something we had for dinner upset both of us but we had a very uncomfortable evening and night. I did not think I would be able to keep my appointment this morning but am glad to say we had a nice service. It was fortunate the day of the fete was so fine. It was nice to see Dulcie at the Fete as she has not been able to walk properly for over five months as a result of an operation on her left foot. It appears that a cyst was removed near the great toe and it turned septic. At one time it was feared that she would lose her foot. It has left a great hole under the ball of the foot which is still discharging. She has been a model of patience under suffering.

We are glad to hear that Baby Charles is getting on nicely after his experience of being dragged behind Ted's motorbike. He has had to be carried about for some time. Another letter has come from Mary. Needless to say she is getting the work into shape and is charmed with the beautiful country. If ever we should visit Dot at Potgietersrus, I should like to go on and visit her. We were thinking some time ago of going north but way has not so far opened. When we heard that Dot's neighbour was leaving, I had hopes we might have got that house but it turned out to be the Bank house so of course that was out of the question.

When we left Vryburg, I gave the two volumes of Dr Holub's seven years in South Africa to the Public Library. They have been good enough to comply with my request and returned them to me. As we have that interesting set of photographs of his exposition, it seemed a pity to separate the books from them. What I shall eventually do with them I do not know. You as children were very fond of looking at the pictures. The books need rebinding which I am afraid cannot be done here. The Library here would be glad to have them I know.

This week, or rather last week, I had a long letter from Vivian Jordaan who was works foreman for me at Vryburg. Mary used to teach him in her night school there when he worked for the Midland News. Since he left me, he has been in various towns. He is now works foreman to the Bantu Press in Johannesburg. He has a very large staff under him and they print a number of native papers. He has done very well and holds a very responsible position. Am glad to hear he is doing so well. He wants me to go and see him if ever I am in Johannesburg.

Tomorrow, Monday, I have a full day of Council Committees so shall not be able to do much writing.

Monday evening. I have had a full day, from 9.30 to a few minutes to 6 with an hour and half for dinner. It has been quite cold but not so much so as Saturday. Mrs Hudson Senior writes acknowledging the basket of apples Dot asked us to send her. They appear to have travelled alright. Hope those sent to others have also arrived safely. Bladen says it is about a month too late for sending green ones. Mom went to her Women's meeting this afternoon and the ladies are getting ready for the Synod which is to meet here at the end of July.

Tuesday afternoon. Have spent all the morning in Council committees and now free for the rest of the day.

There was a remote possibility of my having a trip to Durban in June to attend a Library Association Conference but notification has now reached me that owing to lack of support, due no doubt in some measure to the petrol restrictions and the unsettled state of the country, the scheme has been abandoned. Had it materialised, I had hoped to have arranged to travel with Aunt Emmie who is contemplating getting out of Cape Town for the winter at least, owing to war conditions and the excessive dampness of Cape Town. Doctor has suggested that owing to the improvement in the condition of her heart, it might not do her any harm. She would go as far as Maritzburg and of course stay with Muriel. However there is a possibility of some lady friend going from Cape Town about June 12 with whom she could travel. We still hope that she will be able to visit Cradock on her return journey.

Letter from Joe says it does not seem worthwhile coming just for one day so the prospect of a weekend visit is off for the time-being. Their house has been sold but they have not had notice to quit and the new owner does not take possession until July. We do not know what will happen then. There is no further news about a transfer to Salt River. They all went to their Sunday School picnic last Thursday and had just as fine weather as we had at the Fish River Fete. The children enjoyed themselves. Our Sunday School picnic takes place next Monday. Don't know if we shall get a lift out. Joe says his glasses are a help to him in reading and close work. He has not heard the result of his x-ray examination. Fortunately he gets these extras free except he has to pay the cost of glasses. He thinks the new typewriter is an improvement. It certainly is easy to manipulate and very convenient to handle.

Mary writes brightly from Sibasa. The mountains are beautiful and she has got additional assistance. I could wish that my typing was as good as hers. If ever we do get as far as Potgietersrus, I hope to be able to go and see her. Letter from Dot this (Wednesday morning) reporting all well there. No later news of Rev Legg. Hope he is improving. Alan's birthday yesterday. Hope the little chap had a good time. Dot asks us to send her some bush tea. Does anyone else also want some?

I am rather concerned about my life insurance policy. It is a life policy and I find that the 17 years I have been paying the premium, it comes to what will be payable at death, consequently any further payments – supposing I should live some years longer – will be a loss. I am asking the Company what can be done about it.

Dot is pleased with the improved typing. No letter from Grace this week so far.

I am sending each of you a copy of the Centenary Souvenir and press report of the proceedings which I hope will interest you. You will be interested as each of you were christened in the church.

Rev Briggs, who was minister in Graaff Reinet for some years, has accepted the invitation to follow Rev Weavers here.

We generally go for a walk in the afternoons – after having a rest – as it is generally nice and warm then. I find it too cold first thing in the morning to work on the back stoep. It is alright after breakfast and for the rest of the day.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Just to start my letter before we go out for a walk to see Aunt Charlotte and Aunt Eliza. It is Sunday afternoon and the wind is unpleasant but we feel we ought to see them as often as possible.

First let me say that yesterday we received news from Aunt Emmie that on Tuesday last, she had what she describes as her worst heart attack. She was standing on a chair in her room putting some things away that she will not want as she is looking to go to Muriel at Maritzburg next month. She felt giddy and called out "oh, oh" and Mrs Layton – formerly Miss Billingham of Vryburg, who was using the phone just outside Auntie's room, dropped the phone and went to her assistance. Mrs Armstrong, who is a trained nurse, was out at the time, but an application of a little brandy and resting her on the bed, she soon was alright again. We sincerely hope there will not be any repetition of such attacks. I wonder if she will see her doctor again before starting on her trip.

We are glad to know that Joe and Merle are coming to us on Saturday morning next for the weekend. Suppose Blodwen and the other two children will either stay at home or go to her sisters.

Ted finds that he can do three week's motoring on his motorbike on one gallon of petrol and is able to get home and back to the office for dinner in the hour. Baby Charles was getting on his feet again but his knees were sore still when Grace wrote.

Aunt Eliza has a nasty cold when I saw her this (Sunday) afternoon. She has unearthed a very interesting picture which appears to be on glass or porcelain. To look at it, you cannot make out what it is but when held up to the light or with an electric bulb at the back of it, it shows a most wonderful picture. I have not yet found out how it is done. The picture represents a girl putting a flower in the cap of her lover who is sitting in an inn which is constructed of wooden walls and floors. There are three men sitting at a table, one is smoking. There are two dogs in the room, like German dachshunds, looking at another dog which is looking into the room from the bottom half of the door. I have bought the picture from Auntie and had it framed, without any back to it of course, and it hangs in the window by my desk. Those to whom I have shown it say they have never seen anything like it. It looks like what we call in the printing trade a "matrix". I am sure you all will be interested in seeing it.

It is now Tuesday morning and very cold. Yesterday we went with the Weavers to the Sunday School Picnic about 9.30. Before breakfast I went up to see what Joyce's plans were and found that she and Raymond were going out by the early bus with the other children. It was a very nice day, not too hot or too cold. The wind was not too strong but it gets colder about 4.30. We sat in the car as Mr Weaver was the last to start for home. I do not think we shall go again unless we have a taxi as it is too tiring to wait and having no responsibility as in former days, one rather feels out of things. However we shall see. There was an abundance of foodstuff and the children, as well as the adults, had a very good time. Raymond won a prize for running.

As we are having fires most evenings, we have rearranged the dining room. We have put the table across the room and nearer to the sideboard, this gives much more room by the fireplace. We have the sofa that was in the passage across the room in front of the fire and there is room behind the sofa for chairs at the table.

I have let the garage to the Postmaster for 10/- a month but it has been a job shifting the collection of things to other places. Some have gone to, or are going to, the anti-waste market and other junk to the Red Cross sale. My work bench and tools I am arranging to come onto the back stoep where they will be under my eye and handy for doing any small jobs. I find I cannot do much hard work.

Yesterday being a holiday I suppose all the mails will be disorganised this week and we shall be disappointed in not receiving your usual letters.

Wednesday. We are very grateful to you all for writing as often as you do. We live for our letters and miss them if they do not come. Even a postcard is welcome if there is not time for a long letter.

I do not expect letters today as Monday was a Public Holiday but perhaps something may come before I have to post this afternoon. Monday was our Sunday School picnic and the day

being fine, we went out in Rev Weavers car about half past nine to the usual spot about four miles from town, just beyond the Warm Baths. This where the town should have been laid out owing to the good water supply and being more open than the present situation. In fact, in the periodical court used to be held there many years ago. It is too late to change it now. The day was overcast all day but not too cold or windy. The children all enjoyed themselves, races, skipping etc and of course eating. Joyce and Raymond went by the early lorry and quite enjoyed the outing. We were the last to return as Mr Weavers of course wanted to see that everything was alright

I am afraid my memory is failing me as I see I have already referred to the picnic. Please excuse me.

Today is another red letter day. Fifty five years ago I arrived in Cradock. It was about 5 p.m. Much water has flowed under the bridge since then and I have much to be thankful for.

Later. Contrary to expectations, we have received letters from Douglas, Ruth, Grace and Joe. We had a postcard from Dot yesterday reporting the safe arrival of the apples and all were well. Douglas is very busy attending meetings and opening a South African Party bazaar and has to give evidence in Kimberley in a motor accident case. I have asked him if he could come down for the weekend and see Joe but evidently he had not got my letter when he wrote. He enclosed one from Rex, written from Cairo. It took him three weeks to get there by boat. He complains of the heat and whiteness of the sand. The food is good and he will be putting on weight. He is stationed at a base camp in the desert and was on leave in Cairo when he posted. Lynne was home for the weekend and has been playing in tennis tournaments in town and at Schweizer-Reneke. Arthur was also playing. Sharp frosts have been registered but they hope to get some crops.

Ruth says the apples were lovely. No one grows such nice ones as Bladens. Denis is working very hard. His address is No. 329410, Cadet D.R. Butler, Course 1111 R. R.T.B. Military College, Roberts Heights. He has never felt fitter in his life before. Grace says her neighbour has died from cancer after suffering for some time. All the neighbours have been most kind in helping where they could. The apples lasted the family just a week and were much appreciated. Dot says a number of her friends there are wanting apples as well but Bladens say they are not accepting any orders from outside of Cradock and the season is late for them now. We have distributed over 700. Joe is still looking to come on Saturday morning. Have asked Fish River folk to come in to see the films. It will be Aunt Jessie's birthday on Friday. She says she does not think she will come in as she does not like travelling at night to go home. Joe took the children for a row up the Zwartkops river the other day. They did enjoy it. Blodwen did not venture.

No further news from Aunt Emmie so hope all is well there. The possibility of my having a trip to Durban is off as the response to the scheme of holding a library conference did not warrant it.

Am glad you all seem pleased with the produce of the new typewriter.

Hope you all will enjoy the Union Day holiday.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

We are going to a concert in the Town Hall tonight given by the Convent in aid of the Hospital Funds.

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

The event of the week has been the visit of Joe and Merle for the weekend. They arrived about 7 a.m. on Saturday morning and left again on Monday morning about 9.30. I am glad to say Joe was looking better than we anticipated. Of course he has always been thin but seemed well in other respects. He brought his films with him and in the evening he gave a show of them. We had asked Aunt Eliza, Joyce and Raymond to come but as the weather was so cold, it was arranged for Joe to show the pictures to them the next evening (Sunday). However, Mr and Miss Metcalf, and Mrs Armstrong and a few others came. Rev and Mrs Weavers and their son were amongst the number. They all enjoyed the evening which was over by about nine. We gave them tea etc. Both came to Church with us in the morning and we went for a walk to the park in the afternoon. We had hoped that Douglas would be able to come down whilst Joe was here but he wired to say it was quite impossible. Joe says he has nineteen years still to go before he reaches his pensionable age. He hopes to be promoted in due course which will relieve him of doing the actual hard work at the forge. His work then would be as that of charge-men. He has given up the idea of buying another house for the time-being in case he may be transferred to some other town. He did very well with his Bloemfontein house.

I see by the Cape Times that Nigel Brown, formerly of Vryburg, died in Wynberg Hospital last week. Saturday night was the coldest night we have had so far this winter. The minimum was 25 degrees. It is too cold to work on the back stoep now before breakfast but very nice after. I am typing there now.

I have just received the resignation of our Librarian as from the end of July. I wonder who will get the post now. It will be advertised in due course.

It has been a bigger job than I anticipated in moving all the accumulation of stuff from the garage. A good deal of it will go to anti-waste shop. Have got the carpenters bench out on the back stoep.

At last week's Town Council meeting, the Engineers from Johannesburg, who are reporting on our water and sewage scheme, addressed the meeting. He said we had an ample supply of water for all we require for many years to come. We must, however, install water meters which will save a lot of waste. It was the most encouraging report we have ever had. It is to be hoped the Ratepayers will back us up when we go to them for the necessary authority to raise the necessary loans. It will be the making of the town when the sewage system is installed.

Aunt Emmie has given up her idea of going to Maritzburg owing to her recent heart attack. She is, of course very disappointed but having no one of her own to travel with her, she feels that it is best to give up the idea.

Mary writes brightly from her new job. Finds plenty to do and a pleasure in doing it. She has been visiting another mission station a few miles away. Olive is still away. We have not heard a word from her since she left. It is about five weeks since she went to Pretoria.

Later. The bazaar in aid of the Governor General's War Fund this Tuesday afternoon was a great success. Aunt Jessie and many others from Fish River were in. I was asked to sell by auction three Springboks which realised £12-9s. Some of the buyers gave the bucks back again so that helped the funds. Have not yet heard the total amount realised. Aunt Jessie had dinner with us.

Letter from Douglas today says they have had another letter from Rex. He was sorry he could not come down for the weekend. Lynne has sprained a muscle – presumably playing tennis.

I forgot to say that Merle was very good and happy. She brought a picture book and crayons and did a lot of colouring. She seems to be suffering with nasal catarrh. Hope she grows out of it. Wednesday morning. Attended a Red Cross Committee yesterday afternoon after attending the Governor General's Bazaar. Mom is going to make some biltong from the legs of the buck. Joyce bought one leg and shoulder which she is sending to Cape Town. This afternoon we are asked to attend the opening of the Municipal sub-economic houses the Council have built for Europeans. We are also building 130 for non-Europeans. No time for more, Love to all, Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It is Tuesday morning and whilst it did not actually freeze last night, it is pretty cold and dark when I get up. I shall be glad if all of you will make a note of what time the sun rises in your respective towns as it will be interesting to note the differences. Take June 21<sup>st</sup>, the shortest day in particular. I hope it will not turn any of you out of bed extra early. At present it rises here a few minutes before eight.

We had the experience a few mornings ago of having our two pint bottle of milk stolen from the front stoep. The man delivers it about 4.30 a.m. and we often hear him put it down. This morning we did not hear him. I phoned about it and they sent another bottle later on. The suppliers inform me that they have had a number of similar complaints lately and have not been able to trace the culprit. Quite a number of broken bottles have been discovered in different parts of the town. They are more concerned about the loss of the bottles as owing to war conditions, they are not able to get additional stock.

I nearly had another accident recently. Returning from a Red Cross committee meeting, I trod on the pavement in front of Cull & Kew's shop. The cover was broken and I kicked the loose part in front of me. Of course it was dark and it could not be seen. Had I put my foot into the hole, the result would probably have been a broken leg or something more serious. I reported the matter next morning and they have had the cover repaired. I am too old to be insured against accidents. Dot, in her last week's letter, reports that her next door neighbour's son, Beeton, has been killed in action up north. His mother was a Every-relation of Mom's. He was a bank manager – I mean the father was – who recently retired on pension. She also reports that Mrs Gordon Amm was taken ill and she – Dot – had to fill her place at their Women's Auxiliary meeting. Talking of the W.A. meetings, Mom was complimented on her singing yesterday. A lady remarked on her sweet voice. She was not singing a solo. Alice Biggs writes that her husband, who was on guard up north, broke his leg some months ago in ejecting a man. After some months in hospital, he was on his way home and got as far as Aden, I think it was, and his ship was held up there and has not arrived back yet. He is able to get about on crutches but I doubt if he will return to active service again. Alice has been managing the farming splendidly in his absence. Florrie Biggs' son has arrived in New York. So our relations are scattered all over the world.

Uncle Owen, Aunt Kate and Beryl are back home at Rooispruit after spending some months in Vryburg. They have seen all their scattered children.

Mary tells of an interesting visit to some kraal with the Doctor where twins had been born, one had died and when they arrived on the scene, they found the hut empty except for the child living but deserted. They called and at last an old woman appeared and the child and mother were removed to hospital. The child subsequently died. It appears that amongst the natives of that part – and probably others too – it is unlucky to have twins and their superstition is that drought will follow and so the twins are either put to death or allowed to die.

We have not heard the result of Blodwen's examination by their doctor, but we sincerely hope there is nothing very seriously wrong with her. Hope we shall get news before posting this. Blodwen is very interested in her work for the C.P.S. for their area. Joe tells us that all the men in the Railway Brigade who are working in the shops have to go for a month's training but they cannot all be spared at the same time, so will go in relays. Wonder when he will have to go. He says they may come up to us again for the long weekend in August. It will be nice if they do.

Evelyn says they have had another airmail letter from Rex. It is his birthday on 10<sup>th</sup>. We have written to him and hope all of you will do the same. It is Trevor's birthday as well the same day. Arthur too has a birthday and baby Charles this month.

One must be careful in using old envelopes for redirecting purposes. My last letter to Dot was posted as usual on Wednesday afternoon and to my surprise, it was redelivered to me on Saturday morning. On investigating the matter, I find that the box number of the YMCA has not been entirely obliterated. The letter had gone on from here to Johannesburg and had evidently been

sent back from there instead of being sent on to Potgietersrus. I am sorry for the delay. If the postal authorities had used a modicum of commonsense, they would have seen that it was plainly addressed to Potgietersrus. Grace's letter to us did not arrive on Wednesday last week as it generally does. It only came to hand on Monday, having been opened by the Censor who I understand operates from De Arr. Hence the delay.

Evelyn went to Kimberley with Douglas recently and was able to have the children out to do some shopping. Cecily had not been too well but they were both looking forward to the school holidays which commence on 19th. Lynne had sprained a muscle playing tennis and had been home for the long weekend. She was looking to go to Kimberley for the Union Day holiday with a hockey team.

Denis, I think, goes back to Potchefstroom from Roberts Heights this week. He hopes to get his officer's commission in November. He has not yet received the balance of Uncle Joe's legacy which he was entitled to on his coming of age. Of course, war conditions are responsible for that but no doubt it will come in time. War conditions are also responsible for the lack of dividends on my Father's investments in England and in consequence the allowance due to my sisters has seriously diminished.

I have had a reply from the life insurance company re my life policy. I am still negotiating with them.

I find it too cold to work outside on the back stoep before breakfast but it is delightful afterwards. Having my work bench here as well is also an advantage as everything is so handy. Of course I shall have to keep the place nice and tidy now.

Mom has made twenty pieces of biltong out of the Springbok that I bought at the Hospital Fete last week. I have hung it on a line and in order to prevent any possibility of mice or rats getting to it, have placed a round piece of tin with a hole in it for the string to go through so as to prevent anything crawling along the cord. Quite a brainwave I think.

Aunt Eliza has had a cold which affected her hearing more than usual. She has since been to doctor and had her ears syringed and am glad to say this has improved matters considerably. I forget how many scarves she has knitted for the soldiers. She is always busy. She has been turning out quantities of old newspaper cuttings, many of which brother Joe sent out years ago. She is always very interested in news of you all. She has two copies of Dr Holub's seven years in South Africa. One copy is in German or Austrian. I may buy them from her so as to keep them with Holub's pictures. Joyce gets letters from Dudley fairly regularly. He writes very interesting letters. I guess he and all our Collett boys have been in the thick of the fighting that has been going on for the past few weeks. So far we have not heard of any casualties amongst them. This week we hear that one of Arthur Roberts' sons up north has had an accident and is reported seriously injured – concussion. No particulars have come to hand. His parents are very concerned about it. Tony is his name.

Olive Collett is still away. Have not heard from her since she went to Pretoria. Uncle Walter is still at Roodehoogte so far as we know. The arrangement of sharing with their boy for three days a week did not answer. It does not do for natives to have more than one boss.

We went up to Aunt Eliza's this afternoon for a little while as it was Ray's seventh birthday. He had a few little friends in to tea and cake. He had a number of presents as well. Dudley too has a birthday next month. Wonder when he will get leave. No doubt he has been in the thick of the fighting lately.

Wednesday morning. The seven o'clock news has just reported the first real air raid warning was sounded in Durban and Maritzburg last evening. The all clear was given after midnight. So perhaps it is just as well that Aunt Emmie has not gone to Maritzburg. Three ships have been sunk off the East coast, evidently Jap submarines are somewhere in that vicinity.

Later. Letters from Grace, Dot and Blodwen this morning. Blodwen is fearing an op but is waiting for her lady doctor, who is in hospital for an event, to examine her. Grace says all are well but feeling the cold severely. I see there is no room for more. They are all well. Mr Legg has been removed to hospital at East London. The end is not far off. Lots of love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

First let me say that Blodwen has been overhauled by her Lady Dr – the same one who attended Mom – and she reports that no “op” is necessary or desirable at present. Perhaps in a few years time it might be necessary. We hope that will not be necessary. This should be reassuring to both Joe and Blodwen.

Joe has not said anything more about his “op” so hope there is nothing to worry about there.

I am sorry to say that Aunt Emmie had another heart attack last week and her doctor was called in. He says she must keep in bed for at least a week and do nothing. However she has written a few letters to keep us all informed as to how she is getting on and we sincerely hope there will not be any recurrence. She has given up all idea of going to Maritzburg. Her trunk etc was already packed and according to plan, she would have been arriving in Pietermaritzburg about this time. The news that Durban and Maritzburg have been again subjected to air raid warnings makes it still more desirable that she keeps away from there.

We had a nice letter from Nellie Hornabrook in reply to birthday greetings I generally send her. She says her father and sister Mary are going to East London to avoid the wet weather of the Cape. It seems that they are having a repetition of last year’s rainy season. They had one hundred inches then. We hope they may break their journey here. We do not know how they are travelling but most likely by train owing to petrol rationing. Mr Hornabrook is only 93 years old. I see I have made a mistake, it is her sister Marjorie who is going to East London. Her sister Doris’ husband is very ill and lives at Kids Beach so they will be near her. Nellie has joined the army as a dietician and expects to go to Durban at the end of June.

With regard to the sunrise which I referred to last week, will you notice when the bottom of the ring of the sun is above the horizon is the correct time to take the observation.

I am writing this on Tuesday afternoon. Mondays and Tuesdays before our monthly Council meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays in the month – are always full up with committees. Had six yesterday and four today.

So far I have received six applications for the Librarianship. I phoned to Nessie Dodd-Brown – I mean in case she had not seen the advertisement. She says she is full up with her farming now and cannot apply. She would have liked the post when she applied last time for it.

Uncle Walter and Olive returned on Saturday from their holidays. I have not seen Uncle yet but Mom went up there yesterday afternoon.

On looking through the library minute book, I see I was appointed Secretary in October 1905 and resigned when we left for Vryburg in 1908. The cash book that is still in use was opened by me. The minute book has been in use since 1891. I am going to try to make an index of the minutes. It will take a good many hours to do it.

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>. The only family letter this morning is from Dot. She reports all well except Reg had to go to Pietersburg to have a nasty tooth extracted and has to go again this week. Their local doctor has joined up. Nurses are very scarce there and a new doctor has arrived and his wife is a nurse so the wife is also helping at the hospital. Dot is helping as nurse to the wife who has a young child. It is wonderful how Dot seems to drop in for all sorts of jobs.

I see the S.O.E. lodge in Vryburg is celebrating their 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary in October. I wonder if I shall be able to get to it. I think I am one of the oldest members. There cannot be many still living who formed the Lodge. I should like to be there if possible.

We had a lot of wind during the night and today it is very overcast but the wind is very unpleasant. It might rain. Mrs Kissick, one of our foremost workers in the church, had a stroke yesterday at the station. We hope she will soon be right again.

We had a boy turn up for work yesterday afternoon but there is not much work to do in the garden now except to tidy up. The vines will be pruned next month I suppose. We have been using the cuttings from last year’s pruning all this winter for kindling wood and they have answered well.

Lots of love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

The war news reporting the surrender of Tobruk is very serious and distressing to most of us as so many of our relations are probably involved in it. It will probably be some time before we know if they have been taken prisoner or if they managed to escape. As soon as I hear the news – 7 a.m. on Monday – I phoned out to Uncle Norman as he has three sons at the front and has not a wireless. We must hope for the best and trust all will come right.

I expect some of the family were up in time to see the sunrise on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>. Here it rose in a thick bank of cloud and was not visible for some time. So I tried again yesterday (Monday) and I judge it rose at 7.47, thirteen minutes to eight.

The latest news from Aunt Emmie is that she has been allowed to get up but Doctor says she must not do anything in the way of work etc. She was looking to take a taxi as far as Gladys who is quite near last Saturday. We do hope there will not be any repetition of her attacks.

A few simple truths  
Fishes are weighed in their own scales  
And an elephant packs his own trunk  
But rats never tell their own tales  
And one seldom gets a chink in a chunk.

Sick ducks never go to a quack,  
A horse cannot plough his own mane,  
A shop is not hurt by a tack,  
And a window never suffers from pane.  
-ooOoo-

This Book belongs to .....  
If thou art borrow'd by a friend,  
Right welcome shall he be  
To read, to study, not to lend  
But to return to me.

Not that imparted knowledge doth  
Diminish learning's store;  
But books, I find, if often lent,  
Return to me no more.

Read slowly, pause frequently,  
Think seriously, keep cleanly,  
Return duly, with the  
Corners of the leaves  
Not turned down.

We have been to see Uncle Walter, and Olive has been here a few times. She has bought a second-hand motorcar body without wheels and put it in their front garden for Uncle to sit in. It is quite a nice body with windows complete and he will be able to enjoy the sunshine and be out of the wind. She is making the inside quite comfortable and is putting a shelf for his cups of coffee etc. His knees are giving him a deal of pain and he finds it difficult to move about. He is very bright and seems to have enjoyed his visit to the farm in the Graaff Reinet district. He is very interested in war news but it is difficult for him to follow it all.

We have received 14 applications for the post of librarian to the Public Library. Mrs Derecourt is amongst the number but there is no chance of her getting it. She is finding it difficult running her boarding house now the prices are so high and servants so difficult to get. I am very sorry for her. A final selection will be made on Friday afternoon.

Dot has very kindly sent me a woollen knitted scarf for my birthday. She is somewhat out in her dates. However the gift is very acceptable as by some unaccountable means, I have mislaid the one she and Grace made for me last winter. We have been having terribly cold winds for some time although the thermometer has not been excessively low. In fact two evenings running we did not have a fire in the dining room.

During the week we have had letters from Evelyn, Grace and Blodwen and hope for more before I post this. All seems well for which we may be very thankful.

I have given up having a nap in the afternoons as the days are so short but on Sundays I do indulge for a short nap. Mom always has her 40 winks. We generally retire about 9.30 to ten. I still rise at 6.30 and listen in to the 7 am news and of course at 8.15, 1.15, 6 p.m. 8 and 9.

We had Mr Hultzer, Postmaster, in to tea one evening as his wife is away. We played patience with numbered cards which I have had in storage for many years, in fact I do not know if I have ever played with them since I came to South Africa. It is quite a good game. I am credited with having a large supply of patience which is very fortunate.

I was amused yesterday when we were discussing the war situation and the man giving "listening post" remarked that the German broadcast was giving the show away in something that was said. Mom interjected that she ought to have been a general – my reply was that she was a general.

Letters from Joe and Blodwen today – Tuesday. Joe has been rationed out with kit and uniform etc but has not been called up. He says the men have to go to camp for a month's training. He thinks they will have to do guard or escort duty as they have not been trained and cannot be spared for active service. Doctor has told Blodwen that it rests with herself if she has an op or not. She is in a nervous state.

Recently I have had to purchase new under vests and I find that whereas I have for years past taken 40 inch chest measurements, now I only take 38. Evidently I am not only losing weight but also girth. It does not worry me as it is evidently a sign of old age creeping up on me. Some people are affected just in the opposite direction.

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>. Mom spent last evening with Mrs Schoeman next door whilst I was at Council meeting. It was quite a mild evening and a fire was unnecessary. Tonight the Mayor and Council are entertaining the Afrikaans Teachers Association. They have been holding their annual conference here this week. We intend going. Don't suppose we shall stay the whole evening as everything will be in Afrikaans.

We have had a garden boy for nearly a week but he comes late and leaves at five. Mom has had two of the pomegranate trees taken out near the summerhouse. I do not know if he will stay, he comes late and unless Mom is constantly looking after him, very little gets done.

After dinner Letter from Blodwen suggests coming with the children for the last week of the school holidays. She is not having the op at present, if at all. Joe, she says, looks quite smart in his uniform. Joe reckons the outfit must cost the Government about £30. Grace reports all well. Jean has again come top in exams. Good girl. They are expecting the Moirs and children. They have rearranged the furniture and the home looks nice. Dot says Mr Hudson is now walking without a stick but seems to walk sideways. Gwen's baby is a marvel. At seven months has six teeth, sits up and sucks rusks etc. Mrs Hudson says he is the best looking of all her grandchildren. Rev Legg is making slow progress in East London Hospital.

I must not start another sheet and I find that I am getting short of the thin paper that I use. I cannot get any more like it now so shall have to see what I can get. Ernest's Joan is back from teaching at Cape Town. Dulcie has had to have another op on her foot but not so serious as the last one. She is very patient. Her eldest boy had his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday at Tobruk on Sunday. They wonder if he is a prisoner of war now. It is a very anxious time for all. But the end is not yet. Keep smiling.

Lots of love to each and all from,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It is Tuesday morning and I do not now how I shall get on with my letter this week. Mom has a wretched cold like hay fever, nose running, sneezing and feeling more or less miserable. As for myself, I am far from up to concert or writing pitch. On Saturday, something in the eating line upset my tummy. It was not so bad the next day or the same afternoon as we were able to walk up to see Uncle Walter whom I had not seen since his return home. Olive suggested taking us for a little spin the next afternoon and duly called for us. Uncle was with us and we did not go far. We went to service both morning and evening on Sunday but I was feeling very uncomfortable inside. Sunday night and all day yesterday I have been properly bowled over and not able to do anything in the way of work, just lying about in my dressing gown. However, this morning I am a little easier and trust the trouble is passing over. It is most uncomfortable at present. However I will try to do my best and not break the continuity of my weekly epistles. Whilst talking about Uncle Walter, Olive has bought the body of an old motorcar (Dodge) and has had it placed on a few bricks so that Uncle can sit out in the front of their house in the sun and out of the wind. He will never put on an overcoat or have a rug over his knees. He is 87 and does not like being in the house. He seldom reads and never writes. He is very deaf and his mind wanders at times. He does not talk unless spoken to and it is difficult therefore to hold a conversation with him. He is interested in the war news but is unable to follow it properly. The car is in fairly good order and Olive has made it as comfortable for this as possible. I have given her some planks etc and Mr Muller, who does little odd jobs for me from time to time, has fixed up a shelf under the instrument board on which he can have his cup of coffee and the shelf slides under out of the way. Very few visitors ever call to see him so he leads a very monotonous life.

The Library committee selected the Librarian at present in Middelburg, the only applicant who has had any experience in library work and yesterday afternoon I had a wire from her saying that circumstances had arisen that made it impossible for her to accept the position. Fortunately the committee selected a second choice – Dr Thornton's widowed sister, but we are waiting to hear from our first choice before making any further move.

Talking about the Library, I have been getting on with indexing the old minute books. I have come across the first mention of Butler and Wilkie in 1882 when they were invited to quote for the supply of newspapers and magazines. They have continued doing so almost ever since. Robert Wilkie was a member of the committee at the time. Uncle James was married in March of that year. The library was established in 1850 and I hope to be able to write a sort of history of the institution – when I get time. There are so many things I still want to do.

Last week we had a garden boy, he cannot understand or speak English consequently is not much good to me. Mom told him to saw off certain branches on one of the vines and lo and behold, he has sawn off the wrong ones, one of the best – the last one on the left nearest to the summerhouse. He has also chopped out two of the pomegranate trees as Mom thought there were too many of them and no one eats the fruit. In chopping up the wood, he managed to chop his left heel rather badly so I had to turn to and dress and bandage it. He did not turn up yesterday but is here alright this morning.

The war news is very disappointing lately. Joyce hopes that Dudley is now a prisoner of war as some at least of his regiment are reported as having been captured at the fall of Tobruk. We also fear that the Cradock boys have also been taken prisoners but no lists have so far been issued. There are many anxious mothers, wives and sweethearts waiting for news. For a wonder I was sleeping at seven this morning so did not hear the early news but that which came over at 8.15 was not at all encouraging. The present is a testing time of our faith but the end is not yet. Later. I have been up town this morning to attend a Council committee meeting and to pay the monthly accounts and do not feel any the worse for the effort.

Olive has brought Uncle Walter down to see us this afternoon. I feel honoured. He sat on the back stoep for about half an hour. They brought the news that Neville and Keith are reported

missing but no word of Godfrey. Hilda Collett's only son, Ralph, is also missing. No word has so far come regarding Dudley but perhaps that information will come from Cape Town as he belonged to a Cape Town regiment. There will be many sad hearts in Cradock and district tonight.

Yesterday (Monday) our next door neighbours removed the gadget that has been standing out from their kitchen window on to our side stoep. This was an encroachment onto our property and I have made several requests to the owner to remove it but she has always claimed it as hers by prescriptive rights. We now have a view through their window into their room and into their yard.

The tree we planted about three years ago as a grapefruit tree has given us eight shaddocks instead of grapefruit. We are disappointed as we so enjoyed the grapefruit at 53a Bree Street and were looking forward to having our own tree.

Wednesday morning. I am glad to say I am feeling much better, had a good night but for a long time past, I have been troubled, like Nebuchadnezzar was, by dreams. I cannot understand why as there is very little to trouble me. We seldom have anything to eat after supper which is generally about six. Sometimes we have a cup of milk and water but unless we have visitors, which is not often, we do not trouble to have anything. My dreams generally consist of travelling. They are very vivid and often worry me for a time.

After dinner. Letters from Grace, Joe and Dot to hand. News has come through that all three of Uncle Norman's boys are missing, also Uncle Jack's, Bladens' son and many others. Hope they are not killed. Aunt Gladys has a sister in Groet Schuur Hospital with a broken hip. Joe says he expects to be called up for training near Johannesburg shortly. Do not know what Blodwen will do if he has to go up north.

Gladys Webster writes that Aunt Emmie has been examined by another doctor. His report is that she must not go about alone; must not get up before about ten and go to bed about eight; must not do anything. She is going to Gladys for a month at present. Aunt Eliza is keeping nicely, always busy. Joyce is of course anxious about Dudley but so far as I know, she has not heard if he is missing.

Aunt Jessie and Enid were in today. Aunt Jessie had dinner with us. They are very concerned about the boys having surrendered. They think there has been foul play in the matter.

I am glad to say we are both better this afternoon. Enid says she will come in on Saturday morning and we will go out for the weekend to stay with Jessie and hope to see some of those who are concerned re their loved ones.

Will let you know when Joe will be passing as soon as we hear when he has to go. He thinks it will be about the 13<sup>th</sup>. He has been served with all his kit. We are going up now to see Aunt Eliza and Joyce so must close.

Lots of love to each and all from  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I am glad to be able to report that I am much better than I was last week but still have a cold which is easing off. Mom, I am sorry to say, has not been at all well the last few days. On Friday, Aunt Jessie and Enid were in and we arranged that Enid would come in on Saturday and take us out for the weekend but it got so cold and windy, that we phoned out on Friday evening saying Mom was not well enough to go. It is just as well we did, as on Sunday she had to keep in her room all day. She was very wheezy so we have had the fire going in the bedroom for the second time since we bought this house. We had it again last night and expect we will again this (Tuesday). We have not had the doctor but have used Friar's Balsam for inhaling which has done her good. Of course Mom has breakfast in bed the last few mornings but gets up when it is a bit warmer. It is very nice working out on the back stoep after breakfast, where I am now typing this. Olive and Joyce have been down to see us. Joyce has not had any news of Dudley for some time now and wonders if he was taken prisoner with the others at Tobruk. All three of Uncle Norman's boys are missing. Sometime in the future, a list will be published of the names of the prisoners. The latest from Aunt Emmie is that she is now fixed up at Gladys for a month at least. Gladys has been without a servant for some time but has one now. Aunt Eliza keeps very well in spite of her disability.

I have written to the late Astronomer Royal, who is farming in this district, asking if he can explain why there is such a big difference in the sunrise here and Uitenhage, to Kroonstad and Potgietersrus. Douglas says I must arrange next time for the shortest day not to come on a Sunday. It caused too much disturbance. Evelyn sitting up in bed waiting for the sun to rise, he getting up so early to make coffee etc. I will try to arrange accordingly. Douglas says that Arthur will have to enlist now there has been this reverse in Libya. I don't know how he will get on without him. Joe, too, has to go for a month's training at Mapleton, Transvaal and will be passing here on Saturday morning. His official address will be No. 146796, Pte J.C. Butler, Mapleton, Transvaal. So if any of you are in Johannesburg during the month, be sure to look him up. He does not think he will be sent up north. He is looking forward to the training and fresh air. Blodwen has arranged for an elderly nurse to stay with her whilst Joe is away. She is also taking a girl of 15 to stay with her and go to school.

Ruth says Denis will be passed out a second Lt on November 4<sup>th</sup> at Potchefstroom. She hopes to go up for the occasion. As so many officers have been captured up north, she expects he will soon be sent up.

We received our first letter from Rex on Monday. He writes from Cairo and is enjoying his work. He is doing turning work on a lathe. He has not much opinion of Cairo. There are some fine buildings but the old town seems by all accounts to be very slummy. He has not yet been over the pyramids but hopes to do so soon. He wrote after the surrender of Tobruk. Derick Collett is in the same room as Denis. He, Derick, is engaged to Uncle Gervase's daughter, Roslin. Amy Collett, Derick's sister, has broken off her engagement in Cairo.

I find I am down another three pounds last month in spite of wearing winter clothes – 140 now. We are without a boy again. The garden is more of a nuisance than it is worth to old people like us. We must have the vines pruned this month. Arthur says he has been doing theirs already.

It seems that my letter must contain some account of an accident each week. I had two the last week. I was hanging up the foul in the pantry window when the hook slipped and down came the bird and knocked over a dish of jelly Mom had made. Accident number two was when I was trying to help Mom by filling up the sugar bin. I found I had done so with fine salt. However I have been putting new labels on the various tins, bottles etc. in the pantry and generally making things easier for housekeeping.

I wonder if any of you have noticed that the days are lengthening already. I have noticed a distinct change the last few days.

Joe will pass Kroonstad about midnight so it will not be worthwhile Ted and Grace going to the station to see him. He must let them know when he is returning. Love from Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I am glad to say Mom is getting better from her cold but is still not up to concert pitch. Has not been out in the evenings at all for some time and still has her breakfast in bed. On Sunday, Ina did not put in an appearance at all so that did not add to our comfort but we managed alright as we had cold meat over from the day before and we kept the chicken for the next day. There was a big hospital bazaar on Saturday and Fish River folk had a stall as usual and did very well. I suppose the final result will be in the neighbourhood of £200. They had a mid-day lunch but Mom would not go but the hospital had the benefit of the funds.

Monday was Joyce's birthday and she had a letter that day from Dudley addressed to Ray for his birthday. The letter was dated June 1<sup>st</sup> so she is still without news from him since the surrender of Tobruk. We are all very anxious to know about all the men that have been reported "missing". We had a letter from Rex from Cairo so he was still at the base.

Saturday morning I saw Joe at the station on his way to Mapleton, and hope to hear from him soon as to how he is getting on. I have written to Blodwen since he passed through. I am sorry to say there have been a number of burglaries in their neighbourhood. Their opposite neighbour's house was ransacked whilst the lady of the house was in Port Elizabeth for the day. All her husband's clothing, except his dress suits, were stolen and carried away in the baby's basket.

The accident to report this week is the breaking of the frame of my glasses. In wiping them one evening, I noticed that the glass of the bad eye was loose and the next day the glass fell out whilst I was shopping at Cull & Kews. The frame cannot be mended here but the local optician fixed me up with a new frame and has sent the old one away to be repaired.

Mrs Macleod has returned to Cradock as her daughter has gone to live in Grahamstown from the farm for the benefit of her children's education. She had dinner with us on Monday. I dare say she will be able to help us during the Synod next week. We went to see Uncle Walter and Olive on Sunday afternoon. Uncle did not know Mom the other day. His memory is failing him and he is suffering a good deal from rheumatism in his shoulders. He sits for hours in front of their house and never wears an overcoat nor will he have a rug over his knees. He is still able to walk but very gingerly.

I have been surprised to see how much better Aunt Eliza was walking without a stick or holding anybody's arm. She goes down into their yard to feed a couple of fowls she has. There was great excitement when the first egg was laid. Joyce had a number of letters and presents on her birthday. Raymond is very happy at school.

Please note the following changes of address:

Cadet Denis R Butler, Course 150 A, F.A. Artillery Camp, Potchefstroom.

146796, Private J.C. Butler, Mapleton, Transvaal

228907, Sapper D.R. Butler, 81<sup>st</sup> Engineers Base Workshop, S.A.E.C., U.D.F./M.E.F..

c/o Army Post Office Durban.

He was interested in reading an article by Ruth in the Outspan.

Our neighbour, Mrs Armstrong and her daughter, are back from their holiday in Johannesburg. She has had her daughter's teeth re-enamelled which had been a painful and expensive job. She was unable to see Grace and Co at Kroonstad as time was too short. They did not break their journey.

We had 15 points of rain on Monday night which is very welcome as we have not had a garden boy for some weeks.

The late Astronomer Royal, Dr Wood, who is farming in this district, has kindly replied to my enquiry regarding the difference in time of sunrise in different parts of the Union. This is an extract from his letter. "The principal reason for the differences in time is the fact that we have a uniform time system in South Africa. All clocks show the same standard time. When it is six at Durban, it is six all over the Union. It will, however, be about 24 minutes later before it rises at Kimberley, and Cape Town will be about 52 minutes later than Durban. There is also a difference

in the time of sunrise at different places due to their distance from the equator.” Perhaps all of you knew all this and I may just be exposing my ignorance.

We did not have any letter from Kroonstad last week owing to them having visitors from Cape Town. On Saturday I ran into Ernest Saunders and some of his children. They are down from Kroonstad on holiday. They reported having seen some of the family at church on Sunday.

On Monday evening Uncle Dudley and Aunt Kate spent the evening with us on the way to Port Alfred for ten days holiday. They have had a number of visitors for several weeks and needed a change. They look to be back at the end of next week as all the Fish River folk are providing refreshments for the Synod on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>.

Letter from Douglas says he has to go to Durban on meat exchange business. He travels about a great deal. Arthur has not signed on yet. It will be very awkward for Douglas if he is left alone. He says Rex writes frequently and seems happy in his work.

It is now Wednesday morning. It is delightful sitting on the back stoep with the blue blinds drawn as it is too hot in the sunshine. There was a sharp frost last night. It turned very cold yesterday afternoon, the wind having veered round to the South. All our winds have been from the North or North-East lately.

Letter from Grace says they have had a nice visit from Mrs Moir and her three daughters. The matron of the local hospital is a friend of Mrs Moir's and Grace took Mrs Moir and the girls to see the matron and had morning tea and lunch with her. Grace is again without a servant girl which makes things very awkward.

Last evening I attended the Church quarterly meeting when final arrangements were made for the forthcoming Synod. We have not yet heard what day our visitors will be arriving but we are ready for them. I dare say Ina Macleod or Mrs Armstrong will give Mom a hand if necessary. Mom has had tummy trouble the last few days but am glad to say her cold is much better but not quite well yet.

Letter from Dot just to hand. She suggests that possibly one of the Universities might like to purchase the Holub pictures that I have in our front passage. I will write to them about it. She also says that Mrs G Amm is interested in the Friends Ambulance Unit and would like to make a contribution to it. I am writing her on the subject. The children have enjoyed their holiday. Norman was camping out with scouts and Alan was at the Amm's. Both Dot and Douglas say they fear they will not be able to see Joe during his camping. He is due for a month's training. Hope to hear from him soon how he is getting on.

Cradock is out to raise at least £1,000 towards the £1,000,000 asked for the Prisoners of War Fund. I guess we will do it.

I am getting on slowly with the indexing of the Library minute book. There is a lot of interesting matter to read. Our new Librarian cannot assume duty until January but have arranged with the Miss Loscombes to carry on until then.

I am still very pleased with my Corona, it seems to work faster than the old Remington.

Lots of love to each and all and hope you all keep well and happy.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It will be difficult to get my letter done this week owing to having visitors but will do my best. First I can report that Mom is getting better but still has breakfast in bed and retires fairly early. We have not had a doctor. She does not care for any but a lady doctor and we have not one here. Ina Macleod comes down from the Premier each day and helps where she can. Of course, having visitors makes extra work but things are working satisfactorily.

Rev Shilling arrived by the early train this (Tuesday) morning. We knew him when he was stationed when we were in Vryburg. He says he does not remember marrying Una Florence. Rev Glasson will only arrive this evening late as he had arranged to come with Rev Marsh by car. Both have to attend Rev Piper's funeral this afternoon in Port Elizabeth. It appears that Mr Piper was taken ill last Wednesday with something to do with his feet – which have always been a trouble to him. He was in St Joseph's Nursing Home and it turned to blood poisoning and he died on Wednesday morning. Mr Piper used to be stationed here when a young man and he claimed me as his first friend in South Africa. We have always been very friendly. He lost his first wife a little over a year ago and nine months later married a Methodist Minister's widow.

I am very pleased to be able to report that on Friday Joyce received official news by wire that Dudley was reported missing, presumed prisoner of war. The names of some of the prisoners have already been received but no word of Dudley yet. A letter came from him dated June 1<sup>st</sup> for Raymond's birthday but nothing since. The men were captured on June 21<sup>st</sup>.

Evelyn writes that Douglas was away at Durban and expected back about Friday. They send on my dear alls to Rex who is interested in them she says. He is anxious to get into the fighting line. He is still in Cairo apparently.

The accident to be recorded is of a minor nature. The frame of my glasses broke and was mended in Port Elizabeth but I found it was eating into the side of my nostril so have had to send the frame away again. Joe writes cheerfully from Mapleton. Does not think he will be able to get to Potgietersrus. He had leave one evening and went to see Trixie and family.

Blodwen has got a post in the Town Hall in connection with the C.P.S. Her duties will include the issuing of gas masks, stores etc. It will take two hours each afternoon. She is quite interested in the prospect. The Mayor came to see her about it. She has had another of her poems published. Am glad to say she seems much better in health. The nurse who is staying with her is very nice with the children.

The lady doctor who attended Mom has a baby. We sent her a little present. We have had an acknowledgement from her. Nurse Edith writes from East London that she is far from well.

Ruth says that Iris' son, Hugh, has been appointed captain of a special Corp in Port Elizabeth. I wonder where the two sons of Alan Pohl are. We remember them as lads at Vryburg very well. They have been very kind to Denis.

Tuesday evening 10 p.m. I am waiting up for Rev Glasson to arrive by car. His half section has retired as he did not sleep very well in the train last night. Rev Shilling was in Mafeking and used to visit Vryburg regularly for services at the Congregational Church. He is a very nice man.

I may not be able to add in the morning, in case I do not, I hope you are all well and that we shall have good news from you all in due course.

Wednesday morning. Mr Glasson only arrived at 11.30 last night and consequently I overslept myself this morning. However Mom had her breakfast about her usual time and the ministers had early tea well before they were ready for breakfast. We have had morning prayers and they have gone to their meetings and will not be back until about 1. We had the sharpest frost last night. The thermometer dropped to 21 and the maximum was for the past 24 hours was only 58. Letter from Grace just to hand says Ted has to go to Potchefstroom for 2 weeks training and hopes to see Denis. The children have had a nice holiday. The girls went to a farm and had some riding. The boys are building a new garage. They hope to see Joe on his return. Many happy returns to Ted for 26<sup>th</sup>.

Goodbye all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Well the Synod has come and gone. It has been a very interesting time and our guests have been very easy to please. Rev Shilling only stayed till Friday night as he had to be back at the Institution where he is in charge of native students for the ministry. He says he does not remember marrying Una and did not recognise the photograph. He is a very nice and homely man. Says he bought a motorcar for four shillings, himself, his wife and two children comprised the four shillings. Rev Glasson only arrived at 11.30 on Tuesday night, having had to attend Rev Piper's funeral that afternoon. He, too, is good company. Mrs MacLeod helped Mom most days and had meals with us. Laymen were admitted to the Synod on Saturday and Monday and the meetings concluded with a Mayoral reception on Monday evening.

I have almost made up my mind to discontinue shaving. It is too expensive to go to a barber three or four times a week and for some months I have been doing it myself but as often as not I cut myself. Sunday I had a nasty cut near the ear which bled considerably. On Sunday evening towards the close of the service, I had a nasty turn and had to hold fast onto the pew in front of me. At the close, I told Mom I would go home but she stayed to the sacrament service. I found myself staggering, being very giddy. Fortunately some young men at the church door motored me home where I rested. I had not my heart medicine with me but hot bottles and carbonate of soda did me good and I went off to bed. I was able to attend the meetings on Monday though feeling rather "groggy". I am glad to say I am nearly back to normal this (Tuesday) afternoon. The Mayor gave a very enjoyable social in the Town Hall last evening which did me good. I am glad to say Mom is quite herself again and I hope she will not have any return of her trouble. Mr Glasson went with me to see Aunt Eliza after the morning service and enjoyed a few minutes with her and Joyce. Joyce has not had any definite news regarding Dudley, still reported missing.

This morning we had Rev C. Stephenson and his wife to morning tea. We knew both of them at Observatory. His father was the minister there and he married a member of the church there. He is now chaplain to Kingswood College and is doing excellent work amongst the young men there and at the Rhodes University. He knows Ruth and Denis.

We are troubled with rats again lately. They have eaten all the fronds off one of Mom's ferns in the drawing room and also removed the tassel off the blind and so far we have not been able to find it. When in the bathroom a few evenings ago, I heard a noise and there was a large rat on the windowsill. It ran along the rail on which we hang the towels and then jumped into the bath. Unfortunately there was not any water in the bath at the time and before you could say knife, it jumped out again and although I made diligent search, could not find it. However, I put down some bread and butter – with something else on it – in case it was hungry and have not seen any trace of it since. Mom has seen a couple running along the trellis outside her bedroom window. We shall get them alright yet.

Wednesday morning. A beautiful winter's morning, a slight frost last night but nice and warm on the back stoep where I am now typing. Ina McLeod sat with Mom last evening whilst I attended Council meeting which was over by 9.40.

We have received another postcard from Joe. He says he finds it cold but has no fault to find. They are housed in brick houses, 24 in each bungalow with electric lights. Ted has written asking him to spend the weekend at Kroonstad but it is doubtful if he will be able to get so far. Tom Surmon from Vryburg is in the same bungalow. He used to work for me at Vryburg. It is Roy's birthday tomorrow. He will miss his daddy.

Grace writes that the children are due back at school today. They have not had much of a holiday – the boys have been building a garage. Ted is on a fortnight's leave now. He has been served out with his uniform so it looks as though he may be called up soon.

Last week I had the misfortune to break the frame of my specs and since they have been repaired, they are giving trouble by eating into the side of my nose so have had to get a different frame which is easier and of course more expensive. Love to all, Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

The calamity for this week is the breaking of my dark coloured glasses, not a very serious calamity this time and only cost 2/6 to replace them. Hope nothing more serious happens this week. It is now ten days or more since I shaved and I do not know what I shall look like by the end of a month. That remains to be seen. However I am going to try it. Last Monday, being a bank holiday, we shall not be getting your letters before posting but I am starting early in case they do come. We have been picturing Ted at camp and perhaps Joe at Kroonstad. We rather expect Joe will be going back home at the end of the week as his month's training will be up by Friday. We hope he will be able to break his journey here but expect he will be in a hurry to get back to Blodwen and the children as soon as he can.

You will be sorry to hear that Mr Metcalf is on the sick list again. He was anxious to attend some of the Synod meetings so came to the open session on the Saturday evening. He mistook the hour and went half an hour before time. We met his coming back as we were going to the service so he returned with us and greatly enjoyed the meeting. He sat with us and I noticed he was coughing a good deal so gave him one of my lozenges. He was suffering from a cold and should not have gone out. Doctor says he has a spot on his lung. Nurse Moys is in attendance at night time. I have called a few times to enquire how he is. He came to see us a few days previously and we were talking about Location matters in which he has always been interested. He gave the Location a clinic some years ago and I told him we needed quarters for the nurses. He was quite interested and thought it a good scheme and authorised me to tell the Council that he would give £100 towards it. What he has done for the less favoured people of this town, no one knows.

During the Synod, we had Mrs Willie Saunders and Aunt Gladys and Norman to dinner, as well as the two ministers and Mrs MacLeod, when in dropped George Wilkie and his wife and a lady friend on their way to Tarkastad. They would not stay to dinner. We had not seen them since we called at their farm on our way home from one of our trips by motor up north. Wilkie's father was Uncle James' partner. He has grown very broad and weighs 200 lbs.

We have received a nice book from Rev Shilling entitled "The Heart of London". We hope to read it shortly.

We have heard very little from Mary for some weeks. Aunt Eliza thinks she must be ill. We hope this is not so. A few nights ago I dreamt that she had returned to Cradock as she found the work too hard. This dream has not materialised. I still dream a good deal. Dot suggests that perhaps I go to bed hungry. I do sometimes eat a biscuit in the night if I cannot sleep but that does not often happen. I am very thankful that I can sleep as well as I do.

Talking of dreams, I dreamt last week that Ina was giving notice to leave and sure enough, on Saturday, she did. Her grounds for doing so, she said, was because she was told to clean the boots. Possibly there may be a domestic reason for her wanting to leave. However, we are not troubling about it at present. In the Midland News on Saturday there was an advertisement for a furnished house wanted. I have written for particulars as it seems to me that if we could let this for a couple of months or so, we might be able to take the long looked for trip to see the family. Unfortunately the Railways have cancelled all excursion and tourist facilities as a war measure and they are not encouraging people to travel. I find that by taking ordinary return tickets, we can break our journeys either going or returning. So I am thinking that if we did let the house, we could take tickets to Potgietersrus, breaking at Kroonstad either going or returning. From Potgietersrus, we would break at Johannesburg and take tickets for Vryburg via 14 Streams and back to Johannesburg breaking at Potchefstroom, if Denis was still there, and then to Kroonstad and home again. I should like to be in Vryburg for October 10<sup>th</sup> for the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday of the Sons of England Lodge of which I was one of the foundation members. November 4<sup>th</sup> is the date when Denis is expected to be passed out as an officer. The party who advertises for a furnished house wants it from September 1<sup>st</sup> so it looks as though it might fit in. It will largely depend who the party is and if we can let it. I do not

think I would entertain the idea – owing to the expense – unless we can let it. Probably we will know more before we have to post.

We have had a letter from Miss Head, daughter of Hampton Head, a Friend who lived at Pearston whom Uncle Joe visited when he was out here some years ago. Mom and I called on him on one of our tours. He died on 22<sup>nd</sup> last month. Miss Head I have never met but she wrote from the Provincial Hospital at Port Elizabeth saying her father often mentioned me. For years I have sent him a Xmas greeting. So one by one our friends are passing over. On Sunday old Mrs Baker, who has lived with Loscombes for some years, was buried at the age of 93. Her husband was a minister of the Anglican Church but had to give up the ministry owing to throat trouble. Then he took up giving lessons on the piano at Rocklands.

Rev Grant of Graaff Reinet told us that he had recently seen Aunt Letty and she was quite well. Alan Biggs has been to Cape Town and now has to go to Pretoria about his broken leg. I wonder what the Government is going to do about it. Surly he should be compensated in some way.

Dot wrote last week that the boys had had some friends with them for the school holidays and they had been out cave hunting and had come across some very interesting places. I expect they were Bushman caves. She also reports the death of Mr and Mrs Neilles' only son killed in action up north. They lived at Tiger Kloof after we left Vryburg. She has also met Irene Webber of Cradock, now Mrs Brink, who has been visiting Dot's next door neighbour. We remember her as a little girl here.

Our vines were cut on July 29<sup>th</sup> and we hope that the result will be as satisfactory as they were last year. Time will show. At last we have got a garden boy. Aunt Eliza sent him as he has done various jobs for her. We have to pay him 2/3 per day and he feeds himself. This works out at about 56/- per month. I am sure we could buy all the vegetables we consume for much less than that but he can keep the garden clean and do any odd jobs about the place.

There is a demand for honey and none is obtainable here. I wonder if Douglas has any. We are told that there is none in the country. I wonder if that is true.

Letter from Joe this (Tuesday) morning saying he could not get leave to go to Grace for the weekend. He has been having a very strenuous time in the various classes, including gas drills etc. He does not say if he will be able to break his journey here – probably not – but we will see him at the station as he passes through. He has felt the cold there very much. Of course, Uitenhage is much warmer than the Free State or Transvaal or even here.

Blodwen also writes that Roy had a happy birthday. She has been under her lady doctor's care and in bed for a few days. There will be great excitement when Joe gets home again. We are still wondering if he will have to go up north. Arthur is looking to join up shortly.

Joyce has not had any news of Dudley except that he is missing, presumed prisoner of war. The suspense is very trying but she is very brave about it.

Our Librarian has left and Miss Loscombe is carrying on until the end of the year when our new librarian commences her duties.

Monday holiday was a miserable day for wind and cold. Mom spent part of the afternoon calling on Mrs Stock and her sister and I went as far as the station. Cradock has raised over the £1000 it set itself to get for the Relief of Prisoners of War. Now they are trying to make it up to £1500 and I think they will get it. It is wonderful where all the money comes from.

Joe will have much nicer hours when he gets back to work and less overtime which should be nicer for all of them.

I have had a phone message about the house. They want it from October 1<sup>st</sup> and are coming to talk the matter over on Wednesday afternoon. I would prefer from September 1<sup>st</sup> if possible. They want it for three months. There are no children. I will close now and post to Joe this (Tuesday) afternoon so that he can get it before he leaves. If there is later news will add tomorrow.

Lots of love to all from

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I think I am now in the third week of abstinence from shaving and Aunt Eliza and Joyce think that my beard is coming on nicely. Mom does not say much but perhaps thinks the more. However I am keeping on for the present and will judge how it looks in a few weeks time.

You will be anxious to hear what has been decided regarding the letting of our house. The parties came down on Wednesday afternoon last week and had a good look round and seemed satisfied with everything. They promised to let us know after they had discussed the matter. Up to the time of writing, we have not seen or heard from them. The party is Mr and Mrs Andrews and a daughter who is a nurse. Mr Andrews suffers from asthma and has resided in Durban and other places. He has been a chemist in his time and seems a very nice man. Mrs Andrews and daughter seemed interested but it is possible they may think the bottom of the town may be too damp. However we will surely hear from them in due course. I hope before we have to post.

Joe writes that he expects to be returning on Wednesday but we have not heard definitely what time he will pass. He was sorry not to be able to get to Kroonstad for a weekend. He says he has enjoyed the change but found it very cold. He wore his pyjamas under his uniform to keep warm. There will be great excitement when he gets home. So far as we know, everything has gone on alright whilst he has been away.

We have had a nice letter from Rex, the second so far. He is a good correspondent. He says he is some distance from the fighting line and has decided to complete a five year course as an apprentice after the war to engineering. He is doing welding and turning and thinks the training will be useful to him later on. He still hopes to be a farmer some day. He received my birthday greetings and longs for letters.

Evelyn writes that Arthur and George Hobson have signed on and gone to Cape Town. This looks as though they are looking to join the navy. There will only be Douglas and Evelyn at home now, except that Lynne comes home for the weekends occasionally and Kingsley and Cecily are at school in Kimberley. They will be very quiet now. I hope Douglas will get some suitable help for the farm work. They have been having dreadful winds lately and no rain.

We do not know if Ted has met Denis at Potchefstroom. Ruth asked me to send Denis a pound of beef biltong which I did. Unfortunately it has been stolen or lost in the post. It is a shame that people are so dishonest. Denis has done very well in his exams – 97% is a wonderful average. Ruth looks to attend the passing out ceremony on November 4<sup>th</sup> and if we should be in the neighbourhood, would like us to be there as well. Iris' son has done well and is now a captain, stationed at Port Elizabeth.

The mornings are getting longer. In fact I can now dress without the aid of electric light. I wonder if Government will bring in a bill to change the hours and save daylight.

Had a letter from Una recently. She is teaching at Fish Hoek and so gets home for lunch. Her little boy does not go to school yet. John Shingler is in Alexandria doing YMCA and Toc H work. Mr Florence is still working in the Government service. Mrs Florence is not at all well he says.

We had a letter from Mary recently. She is kept very busy. She keeps well and is very interested in her work.

Dot writes that the children have had a happy holiday. On Bank Holiday, they all went cave hunting and found much to interest them. At one spot, about ten miles from town, they came upon an old native encampment where they found a number of Stone Age implements, arrow heads etc. One of the boys said they would become geologists some day. They would have liked to have got down to Johannesburg to see Joe when he was in camp but petrol restrictions prevented.

I am sorry to say that old Mr Metcalf has been laid up for some time. He has had a nurse for night duty. The weather has not been favourable for him to be about but he is making progress. On Monday we had a nice soft steady rain nearly all day. It registered just under half an inch. The

garden is very wet. We have planted a new grapefruit tree in place of the shaddock which was sent instead of a grapefruit. The new boy is doing very well so far.

I have now come to the end of my stock of thin sheets of paper for doing my letters to you. I have used just over 1000 sheets in just over two years. To be exact, it has totalled 112 weeks or an average of nine sheets per week. I cannot get anymore of the same sort but what I shall be using next week is a little thicker than these and is white. I am doubtful if the typewriter will take eight copies like it has done with the present lot. However we will do the best I can.

On Sunday afternoon, I attended the funeral of the Rev Boggendoel, minister of the Coloured Congregational Church. He has been ill for some years now and was a very good man and greatly respected by all sections of the community. Rev Reynecke (D.R. Church) conducted the service and practically all the ministers of all the churches were present. The Mayor also attended. The church was full. I have on many occasions taken the service there. The body was removed to Port Elizabeth for burial.

I do not know if any of you are collecting cigarette pictures of the Bird series. I have the following numbers and if any of you have any that are not on this list, I shall be pleased to have them, not that I want to encourage any of you to buy cigarettes or to smoke but the pictures are very good. These are the numbers that I have got: 12,20,33,42,51,54,59,62,63,64,76,83,115,119,120, 124. Thanks in anticipation.

Rev Shilling told us the following story. Some years ago there was a deal of controversy as to who wrote the Psalms. One contributor tried to prove that Shakespeare wrote them and this is how he "proved" his assertion. Take the name Shakespeare. There are 4 vowels and six consonants = 46. Refer to Psalm 46 and count the first 46 words and you have the word SHAKE then count the last 46 words of the same Psalm and you have the word SPEAR, so you see, according to this, Shakespeare wrote the Psalms. So that's that.

Tuesday afternoon. A wire has just come from Dot saying Rev Legg has passed away. I presume that this happened at East London. I must write to Mrs Legg. I suppose she will go and live with her daughters and they have a son in East London. Mr Legg was a very dear friend of the family. I was secretary to the Congregational Church in Vryburg and was instrumental in getting him there.

I have just had a call from the Andrews who want to know if we will let the house for six months. Their son from Bloemfontein has come down to advise them and is satisfied with the house. They want a lease so that they can feel settled as they would not like to be turned out. They want a reply by Thursday as the son has to return at the end of the week. We have also discussed another idea and that is if we could hire Gladys Colling's house at Fish River if she was going to her husband at Head Quarters in Pretoria (I think). Mom would then be within walking instance of three of her brothers and sisters and within a few minutes drive of at least four other members of the family, to say nothing of the numerous nieces and nephews. So many have offered advice that I should go slow and perhaps this would be an opportunity of doing so. We have not heard from Gladys, perhaps she is not at home. In any case, we are inclined to accept the chance and if we find it does not answer, we could make other plans even if we did not go up country and went as far as Fish River. We should be near town and doctor, if necessary.

All this has been written on Tuesday. No word has come from Joe as to his movements but no doubt we shall hear something tomorrow. This afternoon whilst Mom was paying a call on the Principal to Rocklands with Mrs Weavers, Mr Paap, formerly of Tiger Kloof, Vryburg, called to see us. I did not recognise him until he spoke. He is now in Government employ – Education Department – as Inspector of Native Schools in the interest of handicrafts. He has invited us to dinner at the hotel tomorrow evening. He is here for a couple of days. His wife has never been in good health, she is living at Stutterheim at present. Both were connected with Friends in some way. Must now close for tonight.

Wednesday morning early. I have just phoned to Gladys at Fish River and she says she cannot entertain the idea as she has a number of boarders and school children to look after. This therefore rules out the idea of going there unless we can make some other arrangement.



Later. Have spent most of the morning with Mr Papp at the Location school. He has a most interesting collection of native handiwork which he demonstrated to the school children in a most interesting manner. On my return, I find a wire from Mrs Legg's son re his father's death. Have sent a wire of sympathy.

Letters from Grace and Dot have also come to hand. Grace says that Joe was due to pass there about six last evening. We have been expecting a wire from Joe telling us what time he would be passing so did not go to the station and now suppose he has gone through already. In his last letter he said they were expecting to leave Johannesburg about two on Tuesday in which case he would pass here some time this afternoon. However it cannot be helped now but we wanted to talk over matters with him.

Well, it looks as though we shall let the house for three months certain and see what happens then. Grace suggests that we stay put with one of the family for the whole time but I expect wherever we stayed, you would get tired of us before the three months were up. We shall have to work out details and let you know.

Letter from Denis this morning saying the parcel of biltong has arrived. I am glad it has turned up as it is very expensive. He doubts if he will be able to visit Douglas as naturally after he has passed out as an officer, he wants to see as much as possible of Ruth and "Uncle Mac" and also his young lady.

Grace reports the arrival of a new calf. Their neighbour has lost five cows from eating some of the grass stored from their own farm. Ted is still away. Mr Metcalf is about again but the weather is against him going out yet.

You will be sorry to hear that May Saunders' married sister, who lives in King Williamstown, had has an "op" for appendicitis which had burst. She is in a very critical condition. Her mother and sister have gone to her.

We had half an inch of rain yesterday and the garden is very wet. I think we shall have more soon.

Hope you all keep well in this changeable weather.

Lots of love to you all.

Dad

The reason for the blank space above was caused by the paper tearing in the typewriter. I have used new carbon paper this week.

Started typing on both sides of paper  
34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Saturday August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I am sorry to say that our trip up north is "off". Everything seemed to be shaping according to plan but the best laid plans of mice and men do not always go as desired. So in this case it has not matured as I had hoped. But life is made up of disappointments and other things. After showing the prospective tenants round the house and garden and their expressed desire for a six months' lease, Mom did not see how we could be away for such a long period. In the meantime, we learned from Gladys Colling that she could not entertain the idea of letting her house as she has a number of school children living with her etc. I phoned to Aunt Jessie and she said she would be pleased for us to stay at Saltpansdrift as she often felt very lonely and there was plenty of room and we would be very welcome. Of course we offered to pay. I had told the would-be tenants that I would let them have a definite reply on Thursday. So I told them that we were prepared to let them have for it three months although my wife was not at all keen on letting it at all. They telephoned on Friday morning that unless they could have it for six months, the negotiations were off. So that's that. Rev Weavers is going to Fish River for service either today or tomorrow and Mom will most likely go with him and explain the matter to Aunt Jessie. I would also have gone but Mr Weaver has given me an appointment for the morning.

Last evening we were invited to a reception to the new Minister of the Anglican Church, Venerable Archdeacon Short and his wife. The Mayor phoned to me after six saying he had a bad cold and would I deputise for him. It was quite a sociable evening and went off very well. Later. I have decided to go out with Mom to Fish River this afternoon and have arranged an exchange with someone for the service tomorrow. We look to return by train on Monday morning so I shall not be able to finish this letter before our return. I have a full day of committee meetings on Monday.

Tuesday evening. We returned from Fish River as arranged. Had a nice time there and saw a number of relations and friends. There were nine to dinner at Aunt Jessie's. We went to see Retreat people and also Orchards. They all are well.

A letter from Joe came on Monday saying he was not well enough to go to work when he got back. He has been overhauled by Blodwen's lady doctor and Blodwen writes that she gave a very unsatisfactory report on Joe's condition. He should have fresh air, plenty of milk etc. We have suggested that he comes to us and that the children go to Rocklands School in the meantime. We have the room and shall be glad to be of service. Today we have also had another enquiry for the house furnished from a party at Addo who wants it for three months. We shall not do anything on this until we know more about Joe and his plans.

Douglas writes that he has probably sold one of his farms and perhaps Lynne will leave the bank in order to come home to assist him. He enquires for particulars of second-hand portable typewriter so if any of you know of one, please let him know. We have had a letter from Arthur from Cape Town. Please make a note of his address: No. 158283, Gunner A.C. Butler, Ach-Ach depot, Ottery, Cape. I have sent him Aunt Emmie's address and a plan of how to get there. George Hudson is with him.

Ernest is in hospital today having had his tonsils out. He expects to be home tomorrow. I saw Mr Metcalf yesterday. He appears to be sinking. Dr says he may last some time yet but he is getting weaker daily. He has made so many wonderful rallies that there is still hope for him yet. Our park keeper is also in hospital suffering from Brights Disease.

Wednesday morning. We are still having cold weather but the days are nice and warm. We have not had as much wind this winter as usual. It came more May and June. Am glad to hear that Douglas has had exceptionally good rains.

I am going to try an experiment this week and that is to save paper by using both sides of the sheet. I cannot tell until I have get further down the sheet so that I can see if it is readable on both

sides. I hope it may be so as paper is getting increasingly scarce. By the way, have you seen the new penny halfpenny stamp? It is just half the size of the ordinary one.

Aunt Jessie has been turning out a number of old photographs of the family and has given me a number to distribute amongst those who may be interested in them. They are mostly old ones of Uncle James' and our families. In this connection I have been looking through numerous newspaper cuttings which I have collected for years but they are now going to the anti-waste market.

We had a very interesting time with Mr Papp from Tiger Kloof. He was able to give us interesting news from those parts. He entertained us to dinner at the Victoria Hotel. He was very interested in Dr Holub's books and pictures.

Our garden boy is still working very well. The garden has never looked cleaner than it does at present. We hope he keeps up to the standard he has so far set. We have not made any plans re a new girl for the kitchen. It does seem to me such a waste of energy just for two people.

There is to be a total eclipse of the moon next Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>. The full moon begins to pass into the shadow of the earth at 4 a.m. South African time. At 5.1 the eclipse is total and the whole face of the moon is darkened. Some of the early risers in the family no doubt will be up to see it. I hope to at any rate.

Later. A very nice post has just been delivered, one from Grace, another from Dot and Norman, one from Denis and one from Una's husband from up north. Denis is passing through tomorrow morning. We shall go to the station to see him. He has at last received the balance of Uncle Joe's legacy. That is good news.

John Shingler is with the YMCA and Toc H but cannot say exactly where. He is very pleased to have ever met us as a family.

Grace says Ted is back after his two weeks in camp. Has had a good time. Grace has been successful with her chickens. Is looking forward to our visit but it is very doubtful now if it comes off.

Joe writes on the back of an envelope dated Monday "Merle is up today, very much better" not a word about himself.

Dot gives particulars regarding Rev Legg's funeral. He was buried by Rev Murray, Wesleyan Minister of East London and buried in the cemetery near the sea, West Bank. Dot is helping at the hospital in Red Cross work once a week. Last time she had three babies to bath.

Let me know how you get on with reading my letter now that it is "backed". My copy is not a success but the others are not too bad. If you have difficulty in reading it, I will revert to the old style of only using one side and perhaps using one sheet per week.

Joyce has not heard yet if Dudley is really a prisoner of war.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It is a sad week for Cradock. On Sunday, just half an hour after midnight 23<sup>rd</sup>, the soul of our dear friend, Mr Alfred Metcalf, passed away. This cast a gloom over the town and district and far beyond its borders. He was a man greatly beloved by all sections of the community. He would have been ninety on March 1<sup>st</sup> next. When we came to live in Dundas Street, he called to say how glad he was we had come into his street. He often popped in to have a chat and the last time he was in our house, we were talking about quarters for the native nurses in the Location and he at once offered to contribute £100 towards the cost. I expect it will be paid from his estate although it is not likely he had mentioned it in his will. A long time ago, he told me what a pleasure it was to him to be able to help financially in various ways to the benefit of the town. I could write pages about the dear old man. He was so unassuming, such a gentleman, would never give any trouble if he could avoid it and was always thinking of others. His daughters say he was such a wonderful father to them. Of course you all met him at the Golden Wedding. He was so pleased to meet you. I shall miss him as though he was a brother. I was glad that I took the service on Sunday morning as it afforded me the opportunity of paying a small tribute to his memory. He generally called me "Charles my boy". I told you at the time, no doubt, how we both got lost in his garden one evening as we returned from a Toc H meeting. He was greatly amused at not being able to find his way in the dark in his own garden.

The funeral took place on Monday afternoon. I was asked by the family to be one of the pall bearers, an honour which I appreciated. There was a slight shower of rain as we walked from the house to the Anglican Church but it did not do any harm so far as I can see. It sprinkled my top hat but I don't suppose that I shall ever wear it again. I could not help noticing how much I have shrunk in size since I last wore my frock coat and black suit. There is much room to let. There were over 150 wreaths sent and I do not know how many cars followed in the procession from the church to the cemetery. They very kindly provided a car for me so as to save me the walk which was very thoughtful of them. A large contingent from the Location and the various schools in the town followed the hearse. All stores closed for the afternoon. I will try to get some extra copies of the Midland so that you can see the report for yourselves.

Uncle Owen and Aunt Kate came to the funeral as well as crowds of people from Fish River and all over the place. We only saw Uncle Owen and Kate for a minute or two. We invited them to stay the night but they could not. They had seen Douglas and Evelyn and family since we had and we should have liked to have a chat. Alison says there were more people at Uncle James' funeral but I don't know as we were in Vryburg at the time. His only surviving son has been laid up for a while with a heart attack – he was gassed in the last war – but he came to the funeral although it was against doctor's orders.

I guess many people will be curious to know what he has bequeathed to various charities. He was most liberal. Not so long ago, he gave £1000 to Toc H and there is not an organisation in town, I guess, that he has not helped. Mom reminds me that during my term as Mayor, we generally invited Mr Metcalf to any function – dinners etc – and he was generally placed at our table or next to us. Of him it may truly be said he was a Christian Gentleman.

I have had the misfortune to drop my fountain pen during the week and cracked the barrel. I am trying to get a silver band put round it as there is no chance of getting a new one in war time.

Ernest has been in hospital a few days having his tonsils attended to. They were removed when he was in England but have given trouble recently. He was not at office for a few days but is better again.

Wednesday morning, 7 o'clock. The sad news has just come over the air that the Duke of Kent has been killed in a flying accident on his way on active service in the north of Scotland on his way to Iceland. All the members of the crew were also killed. What a sad blow for our beloved King and Royal Family.

At exactly four this morning I was in my dressing gown watching the commencement of the total eclipse of the moon. The sky was a little misty and the moon not as bright as usual. The best view was from the drawing room window. I got up several times between four and 5.30. When the moon was completely covered, I could still see the shape of the moon but in a few moments there was nothing to be seen. Mom was content to look at it lying in bed. We noticed a strange brightness all along the western horizon almost as though a large veldt fire was raging. Before the sun rose, I could not see the moon emerged from the shadow. During the eclipse, I noticed a number of stars appear in the sky. It will be interesting to hear if any others of the family witnessed it.

You will be glad to hear that Joyce has at last heard that Dudley is a prisoner of war in Benghazi. As a matter of fact, Olive heard it from the Vatican City radio. Joyce was not at home at the time so left word with Aunt Eliza. Two registered letters she sent to him have been returned.

Evelyn writes that Douglas is taking her and Lynne to Pretoria for three weeks. We do not know if Lynne has left the bank but there was talk of her doing so. Arthur is settling down to work in camp. One of his jobs was to peel potatoes and wash his clothes.

Dot says that Reg has reduced his quantity of cigarettes which to my way of thinking is good news. I should like to hear the same from Douglas. Joe gave up smoking a long time ago. I am still thinking about starting. When, if ever I reach 80, I will make up my mind then whether to begin or not.

I am sorry to hear that old Mr Casewell is in hospital in Vryburg. He had a stroke I understand. It was interesting hearing of Mrs Joubert and Mrs Blackwood, old friends of ours in former days.

Aunt Letty will celebrate her 86<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Saturday. She is still going strong. I wish we could get the four of the family who are over 80 together for a photograph. Uncle Walter did not go to Mr Metcalf's funeral but watched it pass from his car. He will miss Mr Metcalf very much as he often walked to see him.

Later. Letters from Grace and Joe to hand. Ted is back home and has been busy on the plot doing all sorts of jobs. He is now teaching signalling to others. Joe has been off work for a week and is feeling a lot better he says. He is in a quandary as to what is best to do for the future as he is nearing the time for promotion – which means easier work and away from the furnace. His Dr says in a couple of years he may not be able to do hard work. He did not have to pass any medical exam for part-time training but would have to be thoroughly examined if he were to be sent up north. We must all hope he will be guided aright in his decision. He considers my typing on both sides quite a success. Blodwen's job at the C.P.S. did not materialise as they wanted a full time appointment. Little Trevor went to Sunday School for the first time last Sunday and wants to go again – and take sandwiches with him – like his brother and sister do to day school. Joe and Roy went for a ride on their bikes and Trevor on Joe's. They seem to like it better than the car he says. More of a novelty, I suppose. No letter from Dot this week so far.

I think it is just about a month since I had a shave. It has required a certain amount of courage to stand some of the criticisms but on the whole the changeover has been approved. I am greeted sometimes as General Smuts and at others as an O.S. I am not likely to go back to the razor at present.

Lots of love to all and thanks for letters so far received.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It is Tuesday afternoon and nice and warm in the sun after a fairly sharp frost last night. We have not had a fire for a few nights but expect we shall need them for some weeks to come. By my records, I find we had had fires as late as November.

The "calamity for this week" is not a very serious one. I have on many occasions dropped my fountain pen, this time I find that the barrel near the stem, where the nib fits, is cracked so that the nib wobbles considerably when writing. Fortunately our local jeweller has managed to fix a silver band on the stem which will prevent further trouble. I have had the nib for over 30 years so that I should be sorry to have to discard it.

A letter from Joe and Blodwen received this morning gives a better report of all of them. Joe has been in Doctor's hands and the medicine he has prescribed (8/6 per bottle) seems to be doing him good. By the time he has used six bottles, he reckons being quite better. He says his appetite etc is greatly improved etc. He says the food at camp was deficient in butter, milk, etc. which he has been used to at home. One of the boy cooks was run in for stealing butter at the camp. Blodwen also reports that she is in better health and the children too are well. For all these mercies we should be very thankful. Blodwen sends news that her brother Billy is in Pretoria Hospital dangerously ill. He fainted whilst playing tennis and fell. He recovered but had a relapse owing to a clot of blood forming on the heart. Her two brothers have gone up to him and he seems to be making progress.

Miss Metcalf has gone to her brother-in-law's farm near town for a week and then intends going to Port Elizabeth. We have seen a good deal of her since her father's death. She says she wants to give us some memento of her Dad. I am sure we shall treasure it very highly whatever it may be.

Mary sent a telegram of sympathy but it got mutilated in transit. It was telegraphed as from Mark Butler and the office of origin did not figure in the Post Office directory. I was able to find out through the Post Office that it was near Louis Trichardt. Then of course I knew it was from Mary. They had over 200 wreaths. The morning after the funeral, a neighbour asked her if she could have all the ribbons off the wreaths and the frames as well. Miss Metcalf thought this horrible but I think she must have let the party have them as when Mom and I went to see the grave and wreaths, all the ribbons had been removed. The flowers on the grave were a wonderful collection.

Tuesday evening. There was a special meeting of the Town Council this afternoon to elect a Mayor and Deputy for the ensuing year. Both were re-elected unopposed. I certainly have not been overburdened with duties during the year now closed.

Yesterday Ina left according to notice given by her at the beginning of August. I suppose she has worked for us on and off for some three years or more. She has not been perfect but has been a great deal better than many we have had in the course of our 51 years of married life. So far we have not taken any steps to find another girl. Perhaps the garden boy, who is still doing very well, will be able to do the rough work – scrubbing the floors etc. as old John used to do. We have managed alright today. Mom did the ironing, I got the breakfast and we had Aunt Jessie to dinner. Uncle Norman and Gladys, Uncle Gervase and Rouena and Nancy Kyler – Neville's girl, to afternoon tea so have not done so badly. Mom is having a lot of vegetables planted and the boy is kept busy. What on earth we are going to do with all the stuff if it grows, I don't know. I would prefer flowers.

Wednesday morning. Washing up and table set for breakfast and listening in to the seven o'clock news. So far we have managed without undue trouble and hope same will continue.

I am wondering how the daylight saving scheme is going to work which comes into force on 20<sup>th</sup> instant. Will it mean we all get up an hour later? Joe says it is like getting up in the middle of the night at present when he gets his breakfast and is at work by six. Will the wireless times be altered I wonder?

I forget if I reported that Alan Biggs has been discharged from the army as the result of his sustaining a broken thigh due to a drunken Australian falling on him whilst Alan was ejecting him when on duty. He has been in hospital for months and is now home again.

We have had arum lilies in flower already and some of the fruit trees are coming into leaf. We have had sharp frost the last two nights so perhaps that will keep them back a bit. We have ordered a couple of orange trees and a lemon, also golden shower runner.

Denis has received the balance of Uncle Joe's legacy and has refunded what I advanced. He expects to be drafted up north as soon after he is passed out in November. I do not see any chance of our going to see the ceremony. Ruth and her husband are looking to spend a fortnight at Humewood shortly. They both are full up with work and a change will do them good.

Later. Douglas writes that they are going to Pretoria on Friday this week. Their address will be c/o Mrs Ambler, Blackwood Street, Pretoria. They wish we would pay them a visit and leave someone in our house to look after the place. He has sold a lot of their breeding stock but cannot get trucks to send it away in. They had a good rain about two weeks ago and the veldt is good and stock fattening fast.

Grace says Ted is better of his cold. The weather has been dreadful but as they had good rains recently, the dust has not been as bad as might have been. David is troubled with boils on his neck. They are putting their tennis court in order but it is difficult getting people from town to come out to play.

Dot and the boys saw the eclipse of the moon which thrilled the boys. I am sorry to hear that Mr G Amm has flu. You will miss them if they sell their farm. They are such nice people.

We have an interesting letter from Kate Owen this morning. We only saw them for a few minutes when they were here attending Mr Metcalf's funeral. Freda and Peter are going to Rooispruit on 21<sup>st</sup>. Joyce Tilly has gone to her husband who is now stationed at Barberton. She says Douglas has been a great help to the girls. Thera (Mrs Mahan) has let their house for a year and is storing their furniture and coming to Rooispruit and Mortimer on a long visit whilst her husband is on active service.

I have to deputise for the Mayor on Sunday afternoon at the United Service as he will be away from town. I hope the public will turn up in force.

Aunt Eliza is quite excited that she is getting about a dozen eggs a week from her fowls. Am glad to say all at Market Street are keeping well. Joyce has not heard from Dudley yet but hopes to do so in due course.

I am afraid our park keeper is dying from Brights Disease. The man who was in charge of the Warm Baths is now looking after the park.

I think I have told you all the news for this week. We have heard from each household. Hope you all keep well and don't forget to write as often as you can. We live for letters.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Tuesday morning again finds me at my usual pleasure of writing my weekly epistle. I am sorry to say that at the moment I am suffering from a nasty cold in my head. Yesterday morning I was doing a few jobs at the work bench and as it was quite hot, I divested myself of my coat and probably that accounts for the cold. A nose under present conditions is rather a nuisance. We have had the maximum thermometer as high as 90 in the shade and as low as 61 whilst the minimum has varied from 26 to 58. We only had eight points of rain all last month. It is difficult to keep well under such variations but we still live. Mom has been troubled with her back recently but she will do gardening which means stooping etc. with the fatal consequence – a backache. However, she is better today. Yesterday a Swiss gentleman was sent to me who wanted information about the rainfall and temperature of Cradock. He hails from Johannesburg and was surprised at the difference between the two towns. I am beginning to find that it is getting too hot to write or type on the back stoep so shall have to make more use of the workroom or my desk. We notice that the wisteria is now out in flower by the kitchen door, at last we have planted a few roots of it along the side on the north of the house. I hope it will grow there as it will make a fine show from the front of the house. The figs are also coming into leaf but I expect we shall still get some frost. The vines are not showing up yet. The jasmine has been a grand sight this season.

On Saturday we had letter from Aunt Emmie saying she had been troubled with pains in her head for some time so had been overhauled again by her doctor. He has given her some medicine which seems to have relieved her but warns her not to venture out alone. We are glad that she is staying with Gladys. Aunt Eliza will be 82 on the 18<sup>th</sup> and Joe will be 41 the following day. Aunt Eliza is wonderfully bright and always busy. She seems to be able to walk about the house better than she could a year or more ago. She reads a great deal and knits and mends almost incessantly. She is really very wonderful. She never goes out or even sits on her front stoep. Her interest in everything that goes on in the town and family circle is as keen as ever. I doubt if any of us will be able to do what she does.

Last week's report on Joe was more satisfactory. Hope to hear continued good report this week. Blodwen did not take on the C.P.S. job after all as they wanted a full time assistant. She is doing her bit in other ways.

From Sunday we started having our dinners out. Or should say on Sundays we shall go to Derecourts for dinner and the other days we will send our boy to fetch our dinners and have it here. We have engaged a girl to come in two days a week to do the washing and ironing. The boy is still doing the gardening and has been helping with the washing up and sweeping the rooms. What we shall do with all the vegetables that have been planted – if they grow – I don't know.

Sunday was a full day. The church was filled with military, boy scouts, girl guides and the general public at 3.30 p.m. there, as at the United services in the Town Hall, which was also filled. After, that we went to see Aunt Eliza and again for supper. Then service again at 7. The response to the King's request for the day to be set apart for humiliation and prayer was well complied with.

Nurse Edith Collett writes that she has been in hospital for some days and may have to go in again for an operation. She hopes to go to her brother, Jim, in the Eastern Transvaal in October for a few months.

Wednesday morning 9<sup>th</sup>. The last two nights I have been in bed by seven p.m. but I have not yet got rid of my cold. It is a case of "mopping" up a good deal yet.

The meeting called for last Wednesday evening in connection with the Layman's League was only attended by five besides the Rev Weavers. I was very disappointed and it seems to me that speaking generally, there is a deadness in most of the churches regarding the future. One would have thought that the terrible times through which the world is now passing that professing Christians everywhere would be quick to realise the necessity of self examination and putting things in order as far as possible for a better world in the future. I am now reading a book which has just been published and printed in South Africa called the Social Security Book which is well worth



studying. If you have the chance of getting it, I suggest your doing so. My generation will not see the scheme fully put into operation but it is something to be aimed at.

Later. Wednesday afternoon. It is very hot and I have just taken off my cardigan and am sniffing fit to break the band so shall go to bed after dinner and see what that will do for the cold.

We have secured a girl to do the washing and ironing two days a week so that will be some relief. The boy can do what is necessary about the house on the other days. He fetches dinner about 12.30 ad washes up afterwards.

Letters from Grace and Dot this morning. All well at both homes. Douglas is, I suppose, at Pretoria. Hope to hear from him soon as I wrote to him about Joe. Grace says they have got the tennis court in order. Harold says he and David played Grace and Ted and lost to them by one point. Harold says at the end of 1943, he hopes to start his apprenticeship as an electrician in the Post Office. He has passed his signalling badge in the scouts and has been selected as a signaller in the N.R.V. at Kroonstad so he is getting on.

I don't think of anything more to write about so will ring off as Douglas says.

Lots of love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I am thankful to say that after two days in bed, I am back to normal again. Did not find it necessary to call in doctor, am glad to say, as one never knows when you will get rid of them. I was not able to fulfil all my engagements but have been able to do so this week so far.

Let me correct an error I made last week. Aunt Eliza will be 83 on Friday, not 82. Uncle Joe holds the record for the family of 81½, now Aunt Eliza has beaten that. I want to look up what the ages of the other brothers were and my parents when they passed out.

Douglas is "a dark horse" as we say. We were surprised when he told us that he was going for a three week holiday to Pretoria. On Saturday we had a letter from Evelyn saying he did not want us to worry about him so he did not tell us he was going to hospital for an operation on his other eye. We are very glad to know that the op has been quite successful. Another note from both Douglas and Evelyn just to hand say he is getting on quite nicely and hopes to be out of the nursing home by Friday and home by 25<sup>th</sup>. This is good news indeed for which we are thankful and am sure they are also.

The matron of our hospital has tendered her resignation as from December. I wonder who we shall get, as qualified nurses and matrons are very scarce. Wonder if Reg knows of any suitable persons? Miss Stoops is also retiring from the Principal-ship of Rocklands at the end of the year. I fear it will be a sad blow to the school.

Wednesday morning. We had a nice rain after church on Sunday night, 40 points. Letters and card from Douglas and a letter from Grace, each complain of the cold on Sunday. They were sitting by fires and the wind was very nasty. Here we had nice weather on Sunday, it was a bit cloudy but Olive took us for a short spin beyond the Plantation and we enjoyed it. We have not had a fire for over a month now. I still expect frost in October.

Douglas is getting on first class. Doctor says he is his star patient. He leaves the nursing home on Friday and stays at Len Ambler's until the following week. He says they must be home by 25<sup>th</sup>, the day Kingsley and Cecily come home from school. We still hope that we will go to them in October. We have not made any plans in that direction.

Grace tells interesting incidents about baby Charles. He seems full of fun and originality. He paid a visit to a neighbour recently and when one of the children asked him if he was coming home, he replied that he was staying there to eat. Grace says their fruit trees are in full bloom but fears the winds and cold will destroy the crop. David still wants to be a teacher and if he passes his matric this year, she hopes he will eventually be able to go to a University. She would like to get a transfer to say, Johannesburg, so that the family could be altogether. The Controller of Posts at Kroonstad is an old Cradock boy, Walter Peters. His mother nursed Mom on some occasions. I remember him. A letter from Dot is also to hand and one from one from Ben Theron, one of our Louis Botha House boys. He has used his typewriter and writes a very interesting letter. He has been in a lot of the fighting. We sent Dot some of our spare cups and saucers which match her set. They arrived in fairly good condition. Reg is taking a course of exercises by von Diggilen which she hopes will do him good. He is on a strict diet.

Nothing from Ruth or Blodwen or Ruth this week. Ruth and "Uncle John" are to spend a fortnight at Humewood early next month. Hope they have fine weather.

I shall have to be satisfied with a single sheet this week. We are both well I am glad to say and hope all the circle are the same.

Lots of love to each and all,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

We are glad to say that Joe and family have decided to come to us for the short holidays. Blodwen and the children look to arrive either on Saturday next or Monday and Joe will come for the long weekend the following Saturday and take them home. We hope the weather will be kind to them. We will try to get Ina back for the time so as to help with the cooking as we could not very well all go over to Derecourts for meals. We have not seen her since she left at the end of August but the boy says he knows where she lives.

Well we have gone over to Summer Time and so far as one can see, it works alright. I have not got into the altered time for the news properly and have missed a good deal. This (Tuesday) morning I was up at 6.30 summer time and got the seven o'clock news – very little at that but have not got anything since and suppose I shall not until 1.15. As I do not take any daily paper, I feel quite out of the running. Sunday services were held at Summer Time and no one was inconvenienced thereby but I suppose we shall have the evening service from next month half an hour later – 7.30 instead of seven. On Sunday Olive invited us to dinner and came and fetched us after morning service. Roast fowl and beef etc. All very nice. Uncle Walter seems to have a very good appetite. It is very difficult to carry on conversation with him. He is interested in the war news but cannot follow it all. He does not read or smoke but spends all his time sitting out on the front stoep watching the traffic pass. He swats thousands of flies. Olive took us for a little spin after dinner. Uncle never has a nap after dinner.

It was announced during the evening service that “Grannie” Trollip had passed away during the day and was to be buried at five yesterday (Monday). She is Mrs MacLeod’s mother and has been living for years with her youngest daughter, Mrs Watrus. As a schoolgirl, “Bobby” as she was called, lived with us in the Market Street house. “Grannie” was 93 and a splendid character. Her husband died 20 years ago and is buried in the next grave to Uncle James who died 19 years ago. “Grannie” and her husband were at our wedding and frequently came to see us. Some years ago she wanted to see some really good tennis so came to town and sat in the motorcar practically the whole day watching a tournament. She had a wonderful vitality. How different to some old people who have not learned the art of growing old gracefully. Aunt Eliza has shown me a copy of a prayer written by an old person of 90. This is it:

#### OLD AGE

Father of Mercies and God of all good comfort, our only help in time of need, I come to Thee for help to meet the trials of advancing years.

Look graciously upon me, the more the outward man decays, strengthen me the more with Thy grace in the inner man.

Give me courage and patience to bear the privations, the sorrows and loneliness of Old Age. Help me to fight successfully its temptations to be exacting, selfish, unreasonable and complaining.

Preserve my mental faculties unimpaired to the end.

Keep my heart and affections warm, so that I may never fail to sympathise with the joys, sorrows and interests of others and to be deeply grateful for the love and forbearance I receive.

So fit and prepare me for the hour of death that I may face it fearlessly, trusting in Thy promise to be with me as I pass through its dark valley, so that departing in peace my soul may be received into Thy everlasting kingdom.

Amen

Aunt Eliza’s 83<sup>rd</sup> anniversary passed off quite nicely. I went to see her in the morning and found her quite bright and happy. She had a number of callers during the day. Mom went up in the afternoon. She had letters from Dot and Blodwen which no doubt will be answered in due course.

I have received a very interesting letter from Ben Theron, one of my old Louis Botha boys. He has typed his letter but I fail to see how he can carry a portable typewriter about with him on active service. He describes how he was having a bath in the desert near his gun when the enemy sent over some shells and he had to duck and clear off covered in soap to the nearest bunk hole. He

says he has been in the fighting for a long time and gets tired but says they can still take it and hold their chins up. He had been along part of the Nile Valley and is charmed at the delightful greenness of the country as compared with the desert. They duly observed the National Day of Prayer in the desert. He read the account of the Centenary celebrations in the Outspan. They all long for post and papers.

I noticed the other day that the shelf on which our electric stove is resting was coming away from the wall and fearing that an accident might happen, I got a couple of 12-inch bolts made and drilled a hole through the wall and so have fixed it up. I found that one bolt was sufficient. It was not a very difficult job.

We are still getting our dinners from Derecourts and seem to thrive on them alright. We will probably get the girl back for the time that Blodwen and the children are here.

Everything in the garden is bursting into leaf. The vines are slow but the figs are making great progress. The Virginian creeper by the tanks is coming on apace. We have thinned it out considerably recently.

We are expecting Douglas and Evelyn and Lynne will be home in a few days now as the two children will be home for the short holidays on Friday. We are very thankful Douglas' op has been such a success.

We are looking forward to seeing Freda and her youngest boy as they were due at Redlands today.

Mary writes that she has been on a visit to Mrs Organe – Miss Wookey that was. She is on a mission station not so far from Mary. They took their training together. We called on them when they lived in Pietersburg.

I must leave the rest of the sheet for any news that may come in tomorrow. Hope I shall not be disappointed.

A letter from Bull Metcalf hopes that I shall attend the S.O.E. 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary on October 10<sup>th</sup> but there does not seem any likelihood of that happening.

Wednesday morning. I have now got the hang of the new timetable for the wireless. The Johannesburg news comes on the air at seven (Summer Time) after the physical jerks. Then the news from London comes at 7.30 a.m. So I get up at 6.30 and hear all the news. We have breakfast about 8 Summer Time and retire about 9.30 p.m.

Letter from Grace this morning complains of the weather. Lots of wind and some frost. She says I made a mistake last week. David writes his matric next year and Harold his J.C. also next year. The Howards were out for tennis on Saturday and they played three sets. Glad to see they are keeping up their youth. The Howards had an accident on their way to church. He looked round to see if the car door was shut and collided with an electric light standard. A child in the car nearly bit his tongue in half and had to be taken to the hospital and had three stitches put in. Poor kid.

After dinner. No news from Douglas or Dot so far. Expect Douglas is on his way home from Johannesburg. No more news so will ring off, hoping you are all well.

Lots of love to each and all from Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

The following information regarding the ages and dates of marriage and deaths, where they have occurred, may be of interest. They refer to my parents and my brothers and sisters, and in-laws.

Name	Born	Married	Years & Months	Died	Aged Years & Months
Father	18.11.1826	10.5.1850	39.9	24.2.1890	63.3
Mother	18.11.1823	“		21.2.1900	76.3
John	26.1.1851	1.11.1883	44.3	16.12.1928	77.1
Hettie	21.2.1856	“		19.12.1933	83.10
Joseph	15.10.1852	4.8.1881	50.7	25.4.1934	81.6
Sophia	24.6.1850	“		26.3.1932	81.9
James	22.7.1854	28.3.1882	41.3	17.6.1923	68.11
Letty	29.8.1856	“			
Mary	9.6.1856			20.6.1869	13
Eliza	18.9.1859				
Willie	27.6.1861	23.11.1887	51.5	9.12.1938	77.6
Nellie	22.2.1863	“			
Charles	11.1.1864	14.10.1891			
Emma	4.2.1862	“			
Emmie	23.2.1866	7.8.1894			
Bert	7.8.1862		38.8	11.1.1893	70.5

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

We have had a beautiful rain since Sunday evening. A nice soft steady fall and it is all soaking into the ground. So far (Tuesday noon) it measures just half an inch which is very welcome.

Blodwen, Roy, Merle and Trevor arrived up to time last evening. They had a comfortable journey and all seems well. We are looking forward to Joe's arrival on Saturday morning. Unfortunately they have to return by the day train on Monday morning so as to be at work on Tuesday at six, Summer Time. No doubt he will bring his cine camera and show some of his films. He is now Secretary to the Cine Club in Uitenhage. We have notified Fish River folk that they are welcome to come and see them.

Joyce and Raymond are looking to go to Cape Town, leaving here on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Am glad to say that Aunt Emmie is getting better and is allowed to walk about more than some time ago. Quite a number of friends go to see her.

Joe has decided to take up a course of electric welding at the Port Elizabeth Technical College. This no doubt will be of service and perhaps easier work for him if he should get a transfer into that department.

We are sorry to hear that Dot's Alan had a nasty fall recently. It appears that the children were playing jumping off a tank onto a branch and the tank broke. Reg is under treatment and has to live for some time on milk only. Hope the treatment gives the desired result.

Blodwen is singing a solo in Church on Sunday evening. The congregations have been very small lately, so many are away and many more seem very apathetic regarding spiritual things, I am sorry to say.

Freda writes to Aunt Eliza that she is coming to town on Friday with Uncle Gervase and Co who are coming in to the S.A.P. bazaar that day. We hope she will have time to see us.

Trevor fell out of bed last night or rather early this morning. No damage done to him or the floor. The children have poor appetites and Blodwen is on diet too. Am now waiting for letters to come so that I can answer them. I do not expect to be able to write much today.

The Park Keeper has died of Brights Disease. He was buried yesterday.

Letter from Grace says they are boring for water again. I hope they will be successful this time. I wonder what it has cost them all these years in boring? The boys are camping out these holidays. Hope there won't be any accidents.

I do not know if any of you are interested in the list of ages I sent with last week's letter. If you are not, you can return it to me, but if you are interested, you can add the following to it.

Of the ten who have passed on, their total ages amount to 693 years and six months; an average of 69 years and 4 months each.

The total ages of the six still living (September 1942) is 484 years and 5 months. Average 80 years and 9 months.

The children are needing my presence so must ask you to excuse a longer letter this week. Nothing from Douglas or Dot so far.

Love to all  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

The past week has been an eventful one. As you know, Blodwen and the three children arrived on Monday night September 28<sup>th</sup>. The weather was unsettled for the first few days and very welcome rain fell. This made getting about difficult but I think they enjoyed themselves. At any rate, I hope so. Roy and Raymond were together a good deal and had much in common. The pianola was a great source of enjoyment to all, even Trevor was anxious to try his hand at playing. Roy and Merle were quite clever at it and would spend hours playing it.

Joe arrived by train on Saturday morning, the train being over an hour late. The train was full. He says all the lights are out until about 30 miles after leaving Port Elizabeth then the carriages are switched on. The same going back, no lights within 30 miles of the coast. This must be awkward for doing up rugs etc. However it is a war measure. Joe brought his cine camera and some of the films he has taken, including the Golden Wedding ones. We had hoped Aunt Jessie and Grass Ridge folk would come and see them but as they were all in town the previous day for the United Party bazaar and meetings, they could not do so and the petrol rationing handicaps them considerably. However we had a show in the evening. Mr and Mrs Stock came along and Joyce and Raymond and Mrs Armstrong. They all enjoyed it and tea and cake after. Aunt Eliza would not come this time. Joe had a number of new films which were interesting. He is now Secretary of the Uitenhage Cine Club. Blodwen is writing a play for the club which is to be filmed shortly. Last time Joe showed the film, Mr Metcalf was with us. He was very interested in them. Mr Weavers had asked Blodwen to sing a solo in church on Sunday evening but on making enquiries regarding the booking of their seats back on Monday morning, we found that this had not been done and there was no chance of getting back by that train and as Joe had to be at work early on Tuesday morning, their only chance of getting back in time was to leave here by a mixed train (goods and passengers) leaving at 6 p.m. Sunday. This knocked the solo on the head. She might have sang at the morning service but owing to some misunderstanding, it did not come off. However Roy sang one of the Sunday School hymns he sang in the Uitenhage anniversary, "Jesus friend of little children". Blodwen sat with him in the choir and he did his part very well indeed. He has a sweet voice. He knew all five verses perfectly without looking at the book. They had to be at the station by five and it rained in torrents as we went over. Fortunately we had a taxi. Just over half an inch fell in about half an hour. It was very welcome. We hope they arrived safely at home on Monday morning.

I have forgotten to mention that Freda came in on Friday with Uncle Gervase and Aunt Rouena to the bazaar and had dinner with Aunt Eliza. We saw her and Peter for about an hour in the afternoon. She would so have liked to have seen the film in which she and Eric and family were snapped at their farm. Joe was very disappointed in having missed her by a few hours. Freda was looking to leave Redlands on Saturday next. Incidentally she does not like my beard – she did not say if it prickled her too much. Joe did not express any opinion on it but Blodwen quite approves of it and says I look like General Smuts. This is of course a great compliment.

Monday, being a holiday, all the post will be put out of joint this week but I am glad to say we had a letter from Douglas on Friday reporting their safe arrival back in Vryburg. They were away from home for about three weeks. He is pleased with the result of the "op" and can see much better but says he has double vision but the specialist says this will right itself in time. Rex is looking to go to Palestine when he gets leave. Arthur is still at the training camp near Cape Town and is getting on nicely. Lynne managed the driving about Johannesburg and Pretoria without any difficulty. Douglas bought her a typewriter whilst up there. Dorothy Reynolds – that was – is going to Durban on a recruiting stunt. You will remember her and her people when we were at Vryburg. Her husband is up north. Kingsley has come third in his class this term. Cecily is growing fast. Douglas does not say what standard she is in. Talking of schools, we hear that Gladys Webster is sending Alan, and later on, Keith, to the Boys School at King Williamstown. Am sorry they are not going to Kingswood at Grahamstown. I consider it is far better than King Williamstown and it would be much easier for them to come here for the short holidays but it is no

concern of ours. Douglas hopes we shall go and visit them but that is out of the question so far as I can see.

Aunt Rosa writes that some of her boys are prisoners of war but does not know where they are. They have had nice rains round about Dwaal. We very seldom hear from her. Freda says she saw her in Middelburg last week for a few minutes. Ruth and "Uncle" John will be going to Humewood Mansions this week for a holiday. Hope they have a good time. The date for Denis' passing out ceremony at Potchefstroom has been altered to November 6<sup>th</sup> instead of 4<sup>th</sup> but I see no prospect of being there. Ruth looks to go. Hope we may see them as they pass on their way back to Grahamstown.

Dot writes that Reg had to starve for 48 hours and survived it. Then he was on a milk diet only which he had to take each hour for some time then every three quarters of an hour and then every half hour. His latest ration was a pint every hour. He put on three pounds in weight in a week. They are all doing Tromp van Diggilans exercises now. I hope the treatment will have the desired result. Norman is getting on splendidly with his music Dot says. He evidently takes after his grandfather. You may judge for yourselves which grandfather. Dot makes our mouths water when she talks about her strawberries as big as pigeon eggs. The calamity for the past week was an unfortunate accident I had when filling my fountain pen. It slipped and splashed a quantity over my coat and trousers. Mom and Blodwen came to the rescue and the coat does not look too bad but the trousers need further treatment. Times are such that I shall still wear them. A new suit is out of the question. Did I tell you that Mr Metcalf has left £100 to the Pubic Library and 100 books from his private library – the Committee to have first pick.

A nice letter from Rev Hornabrook, who is back again in Cape Town after being ill for some weeks at East London. He was sorry he could not break his journey here. His writing is wonderful at the age of 93. He sends kind regards to all the family. I have received notice from the Building Society that I am interested in that from April 1<sup>st</sup> next they are reducing the rate of interest on deposits from 6% to 4%. This means a further reduction of income to look forward to.

Wednesday morning. On Monday we did a spot of tidying up and in the afternoon Mom went to see Dulcie Moorcroft, who by the way is now quite well after several months trouble with one of her feet. It appears that the chemist, in mixing some ointment, made a serious mistake which caused her considerable pain and inconvenience. I went to see Aunt Eliza. I am sorry to say she nearly had another fall and had it not been that Joyce was close to her, the fall might have been serious.

I do not know if any of you have made any definite plans for Xmas. Grace suggested recently that we go to Kroonstad and that Douglas and family and Dot and Co should also do the same. Mom is averse to going anywhere so that is off as far as we are concerned. Joe and family want to come here for a week and unless anything unforeseen happens, this is what will happen. Of course any others are welcome. We have been having our meals, or rather our dinners, at Derecourts since September 6<sup>th</sup> and it seems to work alright. We are continuing the arrangement and will do so when Joe and family come at Xmas. They can sleep here as they have done this time.

Dorothy Murray, Ernest and Alison's daughter is staying at the Poplars for a month or two. Her husband is still on active service in the Transvaal. Jeffrey was also home for a few days recently. Later. No letters from anyone today but hope there will be tomorrow. It is quite hot today after the nice rain we had on Sunday afternoon. Shall have to take to my lighter clothing soon. Our garden boy was away two days last week and one this so far. I am going to try to sell part of the garden which lies at the back of the house to next door so as to reduce ours and save some work. The present occupier has recently purchased the property and I think will be glad to have a larger piece of ground. The remaining portion will still be quite large enough for our purpose.

We have not heard from Mary for some time now but from all her letters, we recognise how busy she is kept. Must close now with lots of love to each and all and hoping you are all keeping well. Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Last week letters came late from all of you owing to the previous Monday being a holiday. Since then, we have had letters from Douglas and Lynne, Grace and Dot, also one from Blodwen reporting their safe arrival back in Uitenhage. I have booked accommodation provisionally for them at Derecourts for the Xmas holiday but do not yet know when they look to arrive. It is rather soon to book so far ahead.

The typewriter has given me a little trouble owing to the tape getting loose but have managed to get Mr Thomas to fix it up. I was busy typing for the library yesterday so am late in starting so must be brief.

Lynne has written us a nice letter on the Corona Sephyr which Douglas bought for her in Pretoria. She types much better than I can. Douglas had a splendid birthday present in nearly two inches of rain that day.

What is the price of butter in your parts? Here it is 2/9 to 3/4 in Bedford, last week it was 4/-. Eggs are 1/- to 1/3. It is dear in Kroonstad we hear.

Am glad to hear that Grace's birthday was not forgotten. Kingsley had a birthday on Monday. We have had a box of crystallised fruits sent to Rex at Cairo. Hope he gets it by Xmas.

Ruth has a birthday on 20<sup>th</sup>, hope she has a happy day. Expect she will be back in Grahamstown by then.

You will be sorry to hear that Mrs Armstrong has decided to go to Johannesburg to live at the end of the school term. She has her sisters and other relations there and she expects to be able to get some military work to do. Besides that, one of her sons is in the Air Force there and her other boy is in Durban and her husband is up north so they all will be a bit nearer together. Needless to say we shall miss her very much as she generally drops in most days to see how we are. Her daughter is at Rocklands School.

Nurse Edith Collett has been in a nursing home recently and now hopes to be able to go and spend the winter with her brother Jim in the Eastern Transvaal.

Aunt Eliza paid us a short visit last week. She had to come down town to see her lawyer and so came on here. I think it is the first time she had been here since the Golden Wedding. Talking of that event, last year we are reminded of by letters from the Kroonstad family this morning in their letters. Many thanks for all the good wishes. We are not having any "celebrations" this time. I notice by an advertisement in the Midland News that George Byrnes celebrated their Golden Wedding last Saturday. I had a nice letter from Rev Hornabrook last week. He is 93 and writes such a good hand. He was very ill at East London and was sorry he could not break his journey here on his way home.

The two broods of chickens which hatched out at Aunt Eliza's have given her and Joyce much additional interest and amusement. They are very pretty and seem quite healthy.

We have had some good rains lately. On Sunday night a soft steady fall kept on. It registered an inch on Monday morning. I find that the last time we registered an inch or over in twenty-four hours was on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1940 – just 2½ years ago. That was the last time all our rainwater tanks were full and running over. This rain has also filled them. Of course we have never been out of rainwater since I put up all the seven tanks. We have had over 11½ inches so far this year. Of this amount, over 2½ inches have fallen since September 27<sup>th</sup>. So it looks as though we shall be in for a good season. There was a good deal of wind with the rain and the sight of the rose petals, which were blown off the tree at the end of the front stoep, looked like a fall of snow, only it was yellow instead of white. I am glad to say that the rain seems to have been general. The river came down early this week.

Yesterday afternoon we attended a meeting in connection with the possibility of school children having to be evacuated from Port Elizabeth in case of a raid or bombardment from the sea. Of course everyone hopes that there will not be any such occasion but the authorities seem to think it necessary to plan in case of such. To my way of thinking, it would appear that if Port Elizabeth

was attacked, Uitenhage would also be in equal danger owing to the nearness of the Railway workshops which would be a great target for the enemy. That being so, we should naturally expect the families from there to be affected as well as Port Elizabeth. In that case we should naturally expect to have Blodwen and the children coming to us.

With reference to the chart of birthdays of the Butler family I sent you recently, I notice another error. My brother Willie was married for 51 years and one month, not five months as typed. So if we are spared for another few weeks, we may pass his record and so claim to have the longest married life in our family. Mom is the first in her family to celebrate their Golden Wedding.

Evelyn has sent us a very nice photo of Arthur taken in his uniform at Cape Town. Lynne says Rex and Arthur write such interesting letters.

Letters from Ted, Grace and the girls to hand today, also a wire from them congratulating us on this occasion. Many thanks. They have had good rains and all are busy in one way and another.

Joe writes that it seems to him that our clocks go faster than theirs. No sooner was he here than they were phoning for the taxi to come and take them to the station for the homeward trip. He does not say anything further about coming here for Xmas but there is time yet.

Dot reports that they spent two days and nights camping with the children and enjoyed it. The butchery business Reg is interested in have bought a farm near town for running their stock and Reg is responsible for looking after it. The last morning they were there they spotted a couple of snakes. Reg shot one – a puff adder. Reg has put on 9½ pounds during his milk diet and is now allowed to take a little ordinary food. Dot should try the same diet and see if she cannot put on some flesh. They also send greetings for THE day. We have not let it be known that it is such an important day and have not even got a cake for the occasion.

I have still a good deal of correspondence to do for the Library so will not add more although I grudge sending any clean paper in these times. We are both keeping well and both get tired sooner than we wish. We still go to Derecourts for dinner and often have the table to ourselves as we go at 12.30 so as to avoid any crush. We always get home in time for the 1.15 news.

So General Smuts is in England. Next we shall hear he is in America I expect. There is no doubt that the war had now turned in our favour but the loss of life and property is appalling.

Goodbye, lots of love to all from

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

The news of the week is that on Friday afternoon last we received a wire from Lynne saying she was arriving on Wednesday morning. The news was very welcome and we are looking forward to her visit very much. Needless to say we shall do all we can to make it as enjoyable as possible for her. We hope she will not be running away in a great hurry. Before I post this, I hope to report on her safe arrival.

Another little item of news is that since September 1<sup>st</sup> to October 16<sup>th</sup>, I have put on four pounds weight. Fortunately not as much as Reg who put on over nine pounds in a very short time.

Uncle Dudley had a nasty loss last week or so. He has been busy sheering and a cold rain set in and wind resulting in 150 sheep dying from exposure. A number of other farmers have also lost a number. Grandfather Collett, Mom says, would never sheer until after October.

Another item of news will interest you is that Joe and Blodwen are looking to spend Xmas with us. Blodwen is booking seats for self and the children from December 15<sup>th</sup> and Joe says he will be getting a week's holiday as the workshops are closing for the week. We are fixing them up at Mrs Derecourts and we will go there for our mid-day meal as well. Any others of the family are welcome to join us. Blodwen says they will look to return about January 3<sup>rd</sup>. So we have something to look forward to.

We are also expecting a Quaker Missionary from up north to spend a weekend with us about November 7<sup>th</sup>. Her names is Lettice Jowett. She is visiting scattered Friends all over South Africa. We do not know her at all.

Aunt Eliza has had an offer of a full grown orange tree and was anxious to get it planted in her yard. Our boy tried to dig a hole but found it all rock so I think Aunt has given up the idea. She is still very interested in her brood of chickens. There have been no casualties so far as I know.

I am concerned how she is going to manage when Joyce goes to Cape Town about December 9<sup>th</sup>. She has an old native servant who works by day but as Mr Thomas and Aunt Eliza both have their breakfasts in bed, I fail to see how she is to manage. Of course the servant does not stay all day or the evenings but we must hope that all will go well and that there will be no falls or any other accidents. Aunt Emmie would like to come, she says, but that is quite out of the question. Aunt Emmie has been into Cape Town once in the last six months on business and has to be exceedingly careful what she does. She is better than what she was a few months ago I am glad to say.

Monday and Tuesdays were pretty full days with Council committees and Sunday morning I took the service here.

Mrs Willie Saunders and her daughters, Florrie and May, and Clifford spent Thursday evening with us after service. Mrs and her married daughter, Florrie, who has been very ill for some months, were on their way to Port Elizabeth by the evening train, the others returned to the farm by car. We were very sorry to hear that Willie, who used to be at Uncle Herbert's farm, Skatkist (Vryburg) has had to divorce his wife. He has been in military service for a long while at Roberts Heights. He has the custody of the only child, a girl. Ernest Saunders is on the Air Force ground staff at Kroonstad and seems to be high up in the service. He has his family at school there and Grace and family see a good deal of them. The other members of the family seem to be scattered over the country.

We expect to hear today, Tuesday, who is to follow Rev Weavers here next year when he goes to Uitenhage, that is if his transfer is confirmed by Conference. Mr Weavers has been here for six years.

You will be interested to know that Cradock has raised £2165 for the Red Cross Special Prisoners of War Fund. This is an excellent result. Of course, the town and district have combined in the effort and numerous shows, entertainment have been given in order to raise funds and have been very well supported.

Wednesday morning. I do not know what exactly has gone wrong above but I think I had forgotten to move on the locking of paper. I know I did refer to the splendid collection Cradock has made towards the Red Cross Special Fund for South African Prisoners of War. The total amount is £2165.

Well, Lynne arrived this morning safe and sound and we shall do all we can to make the visit, which we hope will not be a short one, as happy as possible. She is looking very well and had a comfortable journey down. The train was only about ten minutes late.

Joyce sent down word this morning that Raymond has whooping cough and his playmate, who lives just opposite, has it also. They will be company for each other in their affliction. Aunt Eliza also has a nasty cold.

We had another nice rain again yesterday – over two inches this month so far. Both Douglas and Grace also report good rains. Douglas has mealies coming up and other crops. If nothing happens in the way of locust pests or a long spell of drought, they should have good results. I am glad to hear that he has sold one of his farms – Augusts – which is rather far from Grass Ridge. He did not lose on the transaction.

It may interest you to know that I have practically sold the piece of garden which runs at the back of our next door neighbour's house. It will make our property more compact and save a good deal of work. We shall probably put up a reed shed near the boundary on the right of our ground where the washing is generally done. This will also provide a sort of store room for garden tools etc. The fence which at present divides the two gardens will then be shifted along in line with the fence from our front gate to the top of the garden.

Dot thinks they may perhaps get as far as Kroonstad for Xmas.

Dot says they are rationed with butter, one pound a week and they get it for 1/11. It is 2/6 here. Eggs 1/3.

Grace reports that the children's exam results are satisfactory. Hope they do well at the end of the year. People say there that they have never known such a good season for crops. Hope the rest of the season is as good.

We have had a sharp thunderstorm this afternoon but not much rain but it has cooled the air. I have not yet taken to my light suits yet but have them ready when required. It has been quite hot some days and cold others. Still we manage to keep well. We had a fire the evening Mrs Saunders and family were with us.

We, all three, are going up to Market Street to Aunt Eliza and Joyce and Raymond. Hope the whooping cough will not upset Joyce's holiday to Cape Town in December.

Lots of love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Lynne has been with us practically a week but unfortunately has not been very well part of the time. We nearly got the doctor to her on Friday but part of a bottle of medicine from the chemist seems to have put her right. It is very nice having her and we wish she could stay indefinitely but she says she may come again. I hope so. She looks to take a run over to Queenstown for this weekend to see the Collin girls who used to be in Vryburg. She has booked her seat to return to Vryburg on November 11<sup>th</sup> direct instead of via Bloemfontein as the train service via De Arr avoids changing twice. She looks to spend one night in Kimberley so as to avoid arriving in Vryburg at the unearthly hour of three a.m. After that she is hoping to go to Trixie who has another son. She is going to see the Manager and some of the staff of the Land Bank here today (Tuesday). The weather has been of the sample variety. We have had glorious rains – about three inches this month – and on Sunday afternoon we went for a short walk to the park when a storm came on and we were pelted by hail stones before we could get home. No serious damage was done.

Aunt Eliza has had a nasty cold for some days. We hope it is not whooping cough. She does not remember if she had it in her youth. Raymond and his playmate who lives opposite has had it and is still coughing. He has not been to school for some time. Doctor says he can still go to Cape Town in December. Joyce has been fortunate not to catch it. By the way, she has still not direct news from Dudley. Some people in town have had postcards from their men. She has had a number of her letters, addressed to him before Tobruk was surrendered, returned marked “missing”.

The sale of the piece of garden at the back of the next house has gone through and I hope to give transfer by the first of November. The fence will be difficult to take up and remove to its new position as the vines are entangled in the netting so will have to be cut away. The water tap that I had laid on to that part of the ground has been cut off and now runs straight up on my own ground. I am removing all the klinker bricks which were along the furrows as I shall build a new shed on the spot where the wash girls do the washing. Of course we are sorry to lose the roses etc which we have planted in that part of the ground but I am sure we shall be glad to be relieved of the worry of having so much to look after. The boy that we have had for some weeks we shall keep on for the present. When the maid does not come, he helps with the kitchen work.

Rev Briggs has been appointed to follow Rev Weavers in January next. He used to be in Graaff Reinet some years ago and for the past four years has been at Shawbury in the Transkei. We did hear that a Rev Chammings was likely to be appointed but at the last moment it was changed. I had met Mr Chammings, who I believe came from Barnstaple, and congratulated him and ourselves on his appointment and I am somewhat sorry that he is not coming now.

Beryl has been staying at Uncle Gervase's and was in town a few days ago and saw Aunt Eliza. They had not time to come here that afternoon as they wanted to get home before it rained.

A letter from Ruth is just to hand (Tuesday morning). She will be passing here next Tuesday morning on her way to Potchefstroom to see Denis pass out as an officer. Denis returns with her on the Saturday evening 7<sup>th</sup> and he spends a few days holiday in Grahamstown. Of course he does not know when he will be called up but as the war seems to be developing rather rapidly now up north, it may not be long.

My bottom plate has been giving a little trouble lately so much so that I have not been able to use my false teeth comfortably. However a trip to the Dentist soon put matters right.

I was pleased to find that the last time I weighed myself that I had put on pounds. Not three but four. I have now taken to my old summer clothing. It will mean changing every evening I expect.

I introduced Lynne to the accountant at the Land Bank this (Tuesday) morning. He is Mr Rix who married Ida Wimble. He is being transferred to Pretoria at the end of November. We are going to see the manager of the Land Bank one day. Mr Rix is trying to arrange for Lynne to have

some tennis on Wednesday afternoon. Ernest has offered to take her to the bio that evening. He offered to take her last Saturday but she was too ill to face it.

On Wednesday the Library Committee are to go to Miss Metcalf's to select the hundred books which her father bequeathed to the Library. We have not received the £100 he left the Library yet but shall invest it for the present when it comes. Miss Bessie wants to give one of her father's caps.

It is a Town Council meeting this evening and I am glad Mom will have Lynne for company whilst I am out.

Aunt Letty has written saying she wants to come over on a visit before Xmas and spend Xmas at Aunt Jessie's. We are looking forward to her staying with us for a time. We see very little of country relations now owing to the petrol rationing.

Wednesday morning. Last night's Council meeting was not over until past ten. Mom and Lynne had, of course, gone to bed. It is quite cool this a.m. and we had another 15 points of rain during yesterday. Since September 27<sup>th</sup>, we have registered 4.61 inches. I hear that our neighbouring town of Middelburg had four inches in half an hour on Sunday last. I wonder how the lower part of the town fared as it is very low.

I have recently fixed up an extension to the wireless set into the front lounge. I got a second-hand loud speaker and now we can make more use of the front room in the evenings. We can now have the news in both rooms at the same time or in either only.

Lynne has used the pianola a little and has bought some new music for herself. She has quite a nice voice. She is a great help in arranging the roses etc and we wish we could keep her.

I see that Rev Shilling, who stayed with us at the recent Synod, is to be the President of the Methodist Conference next year. He is a fine man. Rev Briggs formerly of Graaff Reinet is coming here.

Letter from Grace says they have had rain. Dot has asked her to book a bungalow for them at Xmas. Joe says they will be coming on Dingaans Day and will leave on January 3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>. They experienced a heavy hail storm whilst in church so storms seem to be general. He has been busy with giving exhibitions with his camera in aid of war funds. Had about 40 children at the house to see it.

Gay says Len Ambler had dinner with them recently. He is an Inspector of Civil Service in some way. Dot says Mr Hudson has had another slight stroke and was in hospital. She is trying Reg's diet of milk and has survived two days fast.

Aunt Eliza had invited us to supper for Thursday but as she had a bad cold – which doctor thinks may be whooping cough – we have put it off until after Lynne returns from Queenstown. I sincerely hope it is not whooping cough.

I see my sheet is about full so will ring off. Hope you are all well.

Lots of love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It has been a busy week and I fear that I shall not be able to do justice to all that I want to write. After trying different garages and other sources to see if we could find a motor going over to Queenstown instead of Lynne having to go by railway motor bus without success, she left about 10.30 on Friday by Railway bus for Tarkastad and had to wait there for the train to Queenstown. She returned by the same route on Monday, arriving here about 6.30 p.m. I waited for her on Alison's stoep and the bus stopped to put her down there. It was a terribly hot journey for her but she stood it alright. Just as we returned from our dinner at Derecourts on Monday, who should turn up but Aunt Kate and Thera and her little girl and nurse. They spent the night with us and Thera and child and nurse left after four Tuesday for her Mother-in-law's, Mrs Mahons at Mortimer where she will spend some time. Her husband is on service and she has let her house in Johannesburg for the duration. She will return to Rooispruit later on. Her little girl is a little over two years and is a sweet little thing. Lynne took a snap of her on the swing.

It is now 7 a.m. and Aunt Kate has just left by taxi for the station. The news has just come over that the Eighth Army is still making progress in Egypt and that the Germans are losing very heavily in and around Stalingrad. It does not seem likely that they will ever capture the city. I think the end may not be far off as the enemy may crack when the rank and file recognise that the struggle is hopeless.

I saw Ruth at the station for a few minutes on Monday morning. I thought she was looking tired. She is rightly proud of Denis who has come out amongst the first ten to pass the examinations. They will be passing through to Grahamstown on Saturday night. We shall try to go over to see them. Denis only has one week's leave. He has no idea at present what his next move will be.

Lynne has practically decided not to go home on 11<sup>th</sup>. She has not heard from Trixie yet if she will want her help. She had some tennis at Queenstown and her right shoulder seems rather stiff.

Last evening as Aunt Kate was here and as we had been to the Antique Exhibition in the Town Hall, Mom unearthed her workbox and jewel case to her old treasures. Mrs Armstrong and her daughter also came in. They were much interested in what they saw. The Town Hall show was most interesting. We sent 10 articles and I do not know how many Aunt Eliza sent. Unfortunately she could not go down to see the show owing to her having developed whooping cough. I am glad to say it is in a mild form and doctor has given her some injections for it. Joyce and Mr Thomas have also had injections. Raymond is getting over his attack but it has been pretty distressing whilst the coughing was on. A large number of children in town have had it but so far as I know, Aunt Eliza is the only adult to have contracted it. I cannot describe the wonderful collection of things at the antique show. They were very varied and in good order. It would be a good idea for other towns to do the same, perhaps they have done so. I will see what sort of report they give in the Midland News and perhaps send you copies.

Today is Blodwen's birthday. We hope to hear from them during the day. We had hoped that the film Joe took at Grass Ridge where Lynne was on the grass and the children playing with the garden hose would be here as Lynne has not seen it. It would have been nice had it arrived yesterday so that Aunt Kate could have seen it as well. We have booked accommodation at Mrs Derecourt's from December 16<sup>th</sup> for Blodwen and the children. Joe will come for Xmas week.

I see in the Midland that Cpl. H. Wimble has been killed in action. His sister, Mrs Rix and her husband, who is in the Land Bank, is being transferred to Pretoria in December. Either Douglas or Joe would remember him.

The sale of the part of the garden has gone through. The agreement was that I should remove the fence but as the vines are entwined in the netting, they have asked that it remain until the autumn when the vines will be pruned. However, we have taken three strands of plain wire out of the fence without damaging the vines and have removed the netting that was along the trellis

going up towards the summerhouse and re-erected it along the new line. It looks very neat and has saved buying new material which is very scarce now. Mr Muller has done the work with the aid of Koos, the garden boy. Now I want to build a shed where the washing is done. We have taken all the klinker bricks which were along the furrows as the buyer did not want them. There will be sufficient over to build a servant's lavatory as well. All who have seen the change agree that it will save us a lot of work and worry and makes the property nice and compact.

We had another 20 points of rain last night, this with the 82 points at the end of September and 3.79 points during October makes 4.81 inches in about five weeks. Fortunately we have had only one slight fall of hail which did no damage. Some places have been badly hit by hail so we have much to be thankful for. Next Thursday will be Mary's birthday. If any of you want to write her address is Donald Fraser Hospital, Sibasa, Northern Transvaal.

Lynne has read us a letter from Rex giving an account of his holiday in Palestine - quite interesting. He writes a very good letter.

Later. Letters have come from Grace, Dot and Blodwen, also the film from Joe. I shall not have time to reply in detail to all the letter as I have to fetch the exhibits from the Town Hall this afternoon. Lynne has decided to leave here on 18<sup>th</sup> instead of 11<sup>th</sup>. She goes home first and then to Trixie. She would like to be home for her birthday on 4<sup>th</sup> December and as Arthur is coming home for Xmas, she also wants to be there.

I am reminded that the carbon copies of my letters are too indistinct. I will use new carbon next time.

Grace says they had a cloud burst recently and all dams were filled. They are changing their minister at the end of the year.

Dot doubts if they will be able to go to Grace owing to petrol shortage and Joe may have to jack up his car as his tyres are not too good and he can't get them replaced. She is persevering with the milk diet and is putting on weight.

Blodwen is thrilled at having some of her poems and articles published. One on General Smuts has caught on and she wants me to send a copy to the General, which I will do with pleasure.

Had a nice letter from Trixie this morning too so we are well off for letters this week. Hope to hear from Douglas and Evelyn again soon.

Now off for dinner. Hope you all have enjoyed your food as much as we have.

Lots of love to each and all,  
from Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Here we are again back at home. I am late in starting my letters. It is Wednesday morning and I have seen Lynne off to Johannesburg by the 7.25 train and hope she will have a comfortable journey. She had a compartment to herself but do not know if other passengers will get in the same later on.

We returned from Fish River by train on Monday morning having spent just a week between Saltpansdrift and Grass Ridge. The weather was not kind to us most of the time but for all that, we had a nice change. I was only able to post last letter on Thursday but as the posts from country stations is less frequent than from town, I guess there was some delay before you got your usual contribution. Last Wednesday was about the worst day we have experienced for a long time. I remember many years ago, Uncle James writing that he had experienced a dreadful day on my Mother's birthday – November 11<sup>th</sup>, and in England the same weather conditions prevailed on the same day. History evidently repeated itself. We were at Grass Ridge and had a fire going most of the day and the wind was dreadful. Uncle Jack nearly lost the verandah to his house by the wind. Fortunately he had a ladder nearby and managed to fix it down during the storm. We did not go out of the house all day. One day we took a walk to the cemetery and round the lands and another walk was to see the reaping over the river. I had not seen native women reaping before and was surprised to hear that they are able to reap 306 bundles a day for which they are paid 1/6 per 100 bundles. It must be a back-aching job. Lynne did not have any tennis as when she was at Queenstown, she sprained her shoulder slightly.

I spent a good deal of time in trying to tidy up Uncle Dudley's workshop. There is a great accumulation of dust and scrap iron etc, most of which should be sent to the anti-waste but he does not like to part with it. I was not able to finish the job and expect it will wait until my next visit, goodness knows when that will be. I was able to do a few "ticky" jobs about the house but one thing I wanted to do, and took out some of my tools to do it, was the dining room table needed strengthening. I had some brackets made and sent out after my last visit for the purpose, together with the necessary screws, but the brackets could not be found. The screws are there. Evidently they have been put away too carefully. We were interested in looking at the illustrated London News which they have taken for years. I seldom find time to look at them in the library here. The war pictures were very interesting. My Mother told a story about me when the Franco-German War was on – 1870 – and Father used to bring home the Illustrated London News in those days. When peace was declared, Mother said I cried because I thought that there would not be any more illustrated papers. Needless to say the illustrations now are vastly different from those days.

We went back to Aunt Jessie's on the Saturday afternoon as it was their monthly tennis day at the Station courts. We saw quite a number of relations and friends. Mr and Mrs Weavers were there too as it was service day on Sunday. We slept at Aunt Jessie's and of course went to service the next day. Whilst at Grass Ridge, the wireless was out of order so we phoned to Clifford Saunders and he gave us the war news as often as there was anything special to report. Uncle's set was fixed up again on Friday night. The Eastern Province Herald came most days and I enjoyed reading the whole of Churchill's speech.

Ruth told us some time ago that Denis was to announce his engagement on the 16<sup>th</sup> but it was to be kept quiet until that date. We sent a wire on the day and now this morning we hear from Ruth that Denis had to return to camp earlier than expected. His address is: 2/Lt D.R. Butler, Officers Mess, 27<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Potchefstroom Camp. The lucky young lady is Miss D. Fergusson-Davie, Phelps House, Rhodes University College, Grahamstown. I hope you will write and congratulate them. It is understood that they will not think of getting married until after the war and Denis is to take his M.A. Degree first. Miss Davie is a student at Rhodes and will take her B.A in Fine Arts next year. We have not met the young lady yet but when in East London a year or two ago, her father, who is a Bishop residing at Fort Hare, gave me a lift from the East London Location

where I had been on an inspection with several others, back to town. We hope to meet the family one of these days.

We are glad to hear that Joe is coming, as well as the children, on December 16<sup>th</sup> and all will stay until January 2<sup>nd</sup>. I am hoping he will truck the car as it will be a great advantage for getting about. We had a show of some of his movie films on Monday night. Mr Theron kindly came along with his projector and brought some of his own films. Lynne had not seen them before as she figured in those Joe took last Xmas at the farm and she was very interested in seeing them. We had a few friends in for the evening and they all seemed pleased.

Dot writes that she had a trip to Pietersburg last week with Mrs Watts. Dot's experiment on the milk diet has been successful so far as weight is concerned. She put on seven pounds in two weeks and now scales at 112 lbs.

We hope Lynne has enjoyed her holiday here and at Fish River. Of course she missed the companionship of young folk but most young people are away on active service – at least the loyal section of the community. I do not think there have been any dances whilst she was here. She has been nice and bright and I am sure we shall miss her very much. Perhaps she will come again.

The town has been shocked by the tragic death of Mr Arthur Robert's youngest son. He was flying near Milnerton, Cape, last week when a sea plane crashed into his plane and all of the eight occupants of the two machines were killed on the spot. We have not heard much detail but everyone is very sorry for the family. They also have another son who has been in hospital for about six months. Whilst up north, a military lorry fell across him and others. A portion of his face has been sort of paralysed and the authorities think it will be some months before he is fit again. Their only daughter is also in the army.

We hear that Denham Collett died in Graaff Reinet earlier in the month.

There is a good deal of sickness about. Mrs Armstrong's daughter is laid up with tonsillitis, I think. She was here on Monday evening to see the film of Joe's.

Aunt Eliza is getting on nicely. The nights are of course the most trying. Joyce, too, is better but oh so thin. Raymond still is away from school but is better.

I have not yet placed my order for Xmas cards but must do so this week. I have already received one from England. I hope no one will be sending presents to us at any rate. I have made my own diary for next year as I did this. We are quite satisfied in knowing that we have the love of all the family.

The war news has been quite satisfactory so far as the clearing the enemy out of North Africa is concerned and also from the South Pacific. One cannot help thinking that the war cannot last much longer.

Whilst we were at Grass Ridge, I had a letter from Mrs Fox at Johannesburg saying that Miss Jowett, who was to visit Cradock and who postponed her visit by a week, was taken seriously ill at Mrs Fox's and had a doctor in attendance. High fever etc had necessitated the cancelling of all her engagements. I have not had any news since but hope she is better ere this.

No letters from Douglas, Joe or Dot this week so far but hope all are well.

I do not think of anything more to write about this week so will close with much love to each and all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I am afraid that my last letter omitted quite a number of matters which may be of interest to others besides ourselves. For instance, the five of us enjoyed a few games of "can you go" played with lexicon cards. It was quite interesting. I also forgot to mention the batch of beautiful kittens on the farm. Had Lynne been going home direct, I think she would have taken one or more with her. They were the most playful ones any of us had seen. Aunt Katie's "non-stop" cookies are well known. You don't know when to stop eating them they are so nice. Lynne rather surprised us when she said they often have meatless days on the farm. I can quite understand it when there are so few at home. I am sure that most South Africans eat far too much meat.

I wonder how many of you heard the chiming of the bells in England at ¼ past twelve on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>. We were at Fish River service and Rev Weavers arranged to have the service over in time. His car and Uncle Bertie's both have wireless sets so we all stood round the cars and heard the bells perfectly. To those of us from overseas, it was most impressive.

We also paid a visit to Aunt Agnes. Aunt Jessie was glad that Lynne could drive her car. It is sad to see Aunt Agnes so sadly. She is almost blind and has to be led about the house and everything done for her. She is very restless. However I had a good talk to her and told her of my experience re my operation and we have since heard that she has consented to go to Port Elizabeth and have the eye seen to. Enid was in this (Monday) afternoon and says that her Dad has had a nasty abscess on his tummy and she had to bring him in to see the Dr but fortunately it burst outwardly and has given him relief. But it has also put her mother off the idea of going to Port Elizabeth. I hope she will reconsider the matter. We were surprised to hear at Grass Ridge that the engagement of Joanie has been broken off. She is now a Sister in the Johannesburg Hospital.

We received a wire on Thursday reporting the safe arrival of Lynne at Trixie's. By the way, I hope all of you will remember that Lynne – our eldest grand-daughter – will celebrate her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday next week – December 4<sup>th</sup>. She had hoped to be at home for the occasion but her plans were altered. Arthur will be home on leave on 27<sup>th</sup> so I expect there will be great rejoicing. Lynne no doubt will be home by then.

We were sorry to hear from Grace that Rev McAllister, formerly stationed at Cradock, had passed away at Doonside. He was a great friend of Ted's parents who lived close by. It does seem that there should be a friendly home where such old folk who are lonely could be cared for.

Aunt Lettie arrived by car with Florrie at the wheel on Saturday about ten. Florrie and Ernest went out to see Uncle Norman and also Aunt Jessie. On their way back, they called at Spielmanskop. Florrie had not seen these Aunts and Uncles for some years. She brought over from Graaff Reinet a Mrs Murray and two children. Mrs Murray is a sister of Mrs Beth Rayner whose husband is farming in the Graaff Reinet district but at present is "up north". They are returning with Florrie on Tuesday morning. Owing to petrol shortage, Florrie uses a motor lorry and has a spare car sent which is placed in the lorry and so the extra passengers are able to ride in comfort. "Boy" Vorster, Kathleen's husband, has bought a piece of land adjoining Brooklyn and after the war, will build a house etc there. One of Florrie's sons is a prisoner of war. The other had a wonderful trip in the Queen Mary escorting German prisoners of war to America.

On Friday whilst we were at dinner, a telegram was delivered – or rather a notice card was left saying that a wire was waiting for us at the Post Office as there was no one to receive it when delivered. Unfortunately I only noticed this card when closing the front door at about 9.30 pm. So I at once phoned the Exchange and they read me the wire. It was from Miss Jowett saying that she was arriving the next morning and hoping it would be convenient. As we were expecting Lettie the same time, it was not convenient and after discussing the matter over the phone with Ernest, we thought it best to meet her and put her up at the hotel. It was too late to consult the Lidbetters. However on Saturday morning early, I hired a taxi and went up to Lidbetters and they very kindly renewed their offer to entertain her. I had previously agreed to take the morning service for Rev Weavers who was preaching in the country and Ernest had arranged to go with Florrie to the farm

so we could not hold a regular meeting. However we asked all available Friends down to spend the evening with us, Mr and Mrs Lidbetter, Alison, Lettie and ourselves. We quite enjoyed Miss Jowett's company. She has travelled a great deal in different parts of the world. Of course we gave them all tea etc and we did not get to bed until about eleven. Sunday morning she went to see Aunt Eliza and Mr Thomas, neither of them came the evening before. In the afternoon, the Lidbetters took her to see the Bladens and stayed to supper there and came back by moonlight. After the evening service, we were invited to the parsonage to say farewell to the Rix family who are being transferred to Land Bank Pretoria. Mrs Rix was Ida Wimble of Vryburg. About 15 or 20 persons were present. Mr Rix has acted as church treasurer for some time. He was presented with a fountain pen. Miss Jowett got into touch with the Hooles at Commadagga and left by Monday's train to spend a few days with them before going on to Grahamstown. I saw her off.

The Lidbetters booked their seats to Bulawayo, via Johannesburg and look to leave for a holiday on Xmas Eve. Mrs Lidbetter's sister has been very ill I understand.

Uncle Walter and Olive came along on Sunday afternoon to see Letty but was spending the day at Poplars. They saw her there. Olive is coming to fetch her to spend a day with them before they go to Graaff Reinet district for a short visit. Uncle Dudley had supper with us on Monday as he had come to town to meet Aunt Katie and her mother who arrived by the evening train from Grahamstown. They spent the night in town and left for the farm this Tuesday.

So General Hertzog has passed away. General Smuts is apparently hastening back to attend the funeral. It is wonderful how he gets about. By all appearances, it looks as though the war may end sooner than expected. Smuts does not make any rash promises or forecasts but his recent utterances in Egypt on his way back seems to point to a very decided change for the better in the war situation. May it be soon. Joyce has not yet heard any news about Dudley.

Nurse Edith Collett has been ill for some time in East London, she is now with her brother, Jim, in the Eastern Transvaal.

Wednesday morning. The post has not come yet and often does not get delivered before about twelve. On Monday a united service was held for Prisoners of War and friends of same. The C.O. England Archdeacon took part, and there was a good attendance. Yesterday some of the officers of the Red Cross Society from Port Elizabeth came up for the annual inspection of the juniors and adults. It was the hottest day we have had for a very long time. It registered 105 in the shade so Mom did not go. In the evening we had a terrific dust storm. We could not see across the road. Only 16 points of rain fell but the dust everywhere in the house is dreadful. Some damage has been done to roofs and trees but we escaped. I offered to get a taxi to take us to the Town Hall but Mom was too tired so neither of us went. Aunt Letty spent the evening at the Poplars and I fetched her from there. The lowest temperature during the night was 61. We had our windows open top and bottom but there was not much sleep. However we have much to be thankful for. Most likely we will have another storm this afternoon.

I won't have time to do another sheet so will close with love to all and hope to get good news from you all later in the day. We are both keeping well and I have plenty to keep me busy.

Later. Letters just to hand from Douglas, Grace and Denis. All are well. Douglas says they want rain again and is looking forward to children's home coming. Grace sends some snaps to be passed round.

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Well here are at the beginning of the end of the year. We expect all of you have got your plans made for Xmas and that everything will go according to the plan and everyone enjoys themselves. Here we are looking to have Joe and family from 16<sup>th</sup> to January 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>. The latest idea is that Joe is anxious for the children to learn to swim so I have suggested that he hires a tent from the Municipality and camps out with Roy and Merle alternatively at the Warm Bath. If he cannot bring his car, we could arrange with a taxi to go out and back whenever necessary. Joe is far from well and the change in the fresh air would do him most good. However, we shall see what can be arranged. Douglas will be having Arthur home from about 27<sup>th</sup> and no doubt Lynne will be home from Trixie by then. Grace and family are hoping that Dot and family will be with them but according to Dot's last letter, she thinks they will go to the farm in which Reg is interested. They hope to be spared the experience they had with the snakes last time they were there. Denis hopes to get leave for Xmas so he will be well looked after with his new found joy. Ruth and her husband have recently had a holiday in Port Elizabeth so most likely they will be at home in Grahamstown.

Mr and Mrs Rix called to say goodbye last Friday. They both have had sadness brought very near to them. His brother has been killed in action and now her brother has also been killed. He was married and had never seen his child. Joe would remember young Wimble.

We are glad to say that at long last Uncle Norman has heard through the Red Cross that all three of their sons are safe in Italy as prisoners of war. They hope to hear from them direct soon. It is nearly six months since they were captured. Douglas says they hear from Rex who is still in Egypt, every week. He is a good correspondent.

Mrs Curdons and her daughter, who used to play the organ in the Methodist Church, are amongst some of our recent friends who have left Cradock. I think I told you that Mrs Armstrong has decided not to leave at present.

Aunt Emmie writes that they have had two genuine blackouts in Cape Town recently but nothing untoward happened. Aunt Emmie of course got dressed and am glad to say kept quite calm throughout and is none the worse for the experience.

Grace and Ted celebrated their wedding anniversary on 10<sup>th</sup>. They have sent us some snaps which are going the rounds. They are quite good. Harold is in uniform and although he is only 15½ years old, is 6 ft 3 inches in height. What he is going to be when he stops growing, I don't know.

I weighed myself recently and am still going down. I am now 145 in summer clothing. I do not know if my diet has anything to do with it. My "mess of porridge" causes some amusement sometimes. Two tablespoons of dry bran with about the same quantity of loose oats porridge and a little stewed fruit is about my daily ration. I am glad to say that I am keeping well on it.

We are enjoying Aunt Letty's company but am sorry she is so deaf. She gets about quite nicely and is full of fun and is interested in all that is going on. Olive took all of us for a drive up the new road the Council has made up Oukop, the hill overlooking the town across the river. There is a splendid view of the whole town from the top. A fort was established there during the Boer War. I have suggested to the Council that we stock it with some of the surplus bucks we have in the park and make it a show place like Naval Hill in Bloemfontein.

At a recent function, I met a Lt Milne and naturally asked if he was related to our Mr Milne. He says he has an Uncle living in Aberdeen, Scotland, and is going to enquire if it is the same. He is in the R.A. Ordinance Corps and was in Tobruk for nine months, three of which were siege months.

I am glad to be able to report good news. Last evening Joyce received a cable from the Red Cross saying Dudley was a prisoner-of-war in Italy. No camp was mentioned but it is satisfactory to know that he is alive and well.

Aunt Emmie had sent us a snap of herself taken reclining on a sofa, with a pet dog at her feet. It is quite good of her but rather on the small size.

We are glad to hear that Arthur has done so well in his drilling etc. He came second out of 40 in his shooting test. He has nearly finished his training. He has been enjoying some fishing at Hermanus.

We also hear that Aunt Kate Owen and Beryl have gone to Port Elizabeth and that Molly may be going to Rooispruit.

Wednesday morning. Owing to Mr Rix's departure, we had a meeting of the Boy Scout Association last evening. I was appointed chairman last February at the annual meeting but no meeting has been held in the meantime. No one could be found who would take over the secretaryship so for the time-being, I have the job of being Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. I don't think the job will be very arduous. It is increasingly difficult to find willing workers.

Today the Women's Emergency League are holding a big effort to raise funds for war purposes. They are having a Xmas tree and many side shows.

A letter from Lynne this morning reports all well there. She is having a good time and is kept busy attending to the baby. She sends her love to all. Grace also writes that she is busy in various ways at this time of the year. Ted is acting Postmaster for a couple of months. The assistant Postmaster here is being transferred prior to his retirement on pension next year. We had fondly hoped that Ted might have been transferred here when there was a vacancy.

Joyce leaves for Cape Town next Monday if Raymond does not contract some other complaint in the meantime. He has hardly been to school this quarter. Aunt Eliza, I saw this morning and she appears to be about normal. I do hope she will manage alright whilst Joyce is away.

Please do not think of sending any Xmas presents to us. There is nothing we are wanting and are quite content knowing we have your love and affection.

It seems as though we are having a return visit of winter. Last week we experienced 105 degrees in the shade and today the maximum is only 58. People are about in overcoats.

The last letters from Uitenhage are not encouraging so far as Joe's health is concerned. We hope the ten days change here will do him good.

Aunt Jessie and Enid are in town for the bazaar this afternoon. Uncle Jack has not had any news of his son, Hilton, yet. It seems as though almost all the other local boys have been accounted for except Hilton.

The war situation is much more favourable than it has been since it commenced. I hope Hitler and his associates have had enough and that hostilities will soon cease.

Lots of love to all,

Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
Wednesday December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

I returned back from a surprise visit to Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage this morning. It happened in this wise. Last week, Miss Metcalf told me in the Library that she was going to Port Elizabeth and I jokingly said did she not want someone to open the gates for her. She said that was just what she did want. She has a native driver and was taking another lady and her niece, who has been down with scarlet fever, for a change. She thought she would go on Friday but got sick herself and had to put it off. As Aunt Letty was here and would be company for Mom, she approved of my going and as we have not been getting good news about Joe's health, I thought it would be a good opportunity of giving them a surprise visit. Miss Metcalf thought she would go on Saturday but as we had some rain, put it off to Monday. On Saturday evening she sent word that she would start at nine on Sunday and would I be ready? We started at 9.15 and picked up Miss Blundell, an elderly lady who wanted a lift as far as Grahamstown. We called at Mr Solomon's – Miss Metcalf's brother-in-law's farm and picked up the little girl – about eight years old. The roads were dry and the country looking fine after the good rains we have had. We stopped at Bedford for morning tea and halted along the road before reaching Grahamstown for refreshment. We got to Grahamstown about 1.30. I got off at Lexham whilst Miss Blundell was taken to her destination. Ruth and John had finished dinner. I was pleased to see both of them looking very well. We were off again in half an hour. We had afternoon tea along the road and reached Port Elizabeth about five. There we got a return ticket for the boy to go back to Cradock by the evening train, Miss Metcalf keeping the car for driving about Port Elizabeth. I caught the 5.45 train to Uitenhage and walked to Joe's – about ten minutes or so. They were all at supper. A little girlfriend of Meryl's answered my knock. Blodwen came and literally "fell on my neck and kissed". They were very surprised and although I say it myself, were pleased to see me. I slept in Roy's bed in Joe's room and Roy was promoted to the settee in the lounge. Joe seems very tired and no doubt the work at the furnace is very distressing in this heat. Most days he works till 8.15 taking some refreshment back with him after his 12 o'clock dinner. Monday evening he was excused from overtime as he had a cine club committee meeting – he is secretary. I took the opportunity of visiting the Pubic Library so as to gain some information which may be useful in running the library here.

I was anxious to get home by this morning as there was a possibility of Aunt Letty going out to Uncle Bertie's for a visit and also there is to be a farewell social to the Weavers this evening. Joe asked one of his neighbours to book my seat for Tuesday night's train. He phoned to say that there was not a single seat available in the second class. So I phoned again and after some trouble, he managed to get a first class seat and I duly arrived. Joe also managed to get Tuesday afternoon off so took the family in by car as Blodwen wanted to do some shopping and Joe had to get some extra kit as he has to camp out over the weekend at Walmer. We went as far as Humewood but did not stop. We called at Blodwen's sister on their way home and I was asked to stay to supper and they very kindly saw me off on the train. This was a great convenience as owing to the blackout regulations, no lights are allowed on the train or station and it would have been difficult to find my compartment. It was not quite dark when we started but they do not switch on the lights in the train until about ten p.m. when they are about thirty miles from the coast. Joe and Blodwen were going to the Children's Home Xmas entertainment – Joe is on the Committee – that evening and I hope they had a good time. They all are due to arrive here this day next week and leave again on January 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>. I have to book seats for them. Thus ended a very nice, though short, holiday.

On arriving this morning, Mom told me the sad news that Dorothy Murray's baby arrived yesterday but unfortunately it is not normal. It is a little girl and there seems to be something wrong about the head. It was a chloroform case. Of course everyone is terribly disappointed. Aunt Letty has been looking forward to being a great-grandmother and of course is very disappointed. It is presumed the child will live. They have wired for her husband to get leave if possible at once. He was here a few days ago and was expected again shortly. We must hope for the best.

Mrs Armstrong's daughter went to hospital yesterday for her tonsils to be removed and hopes she may be able to come home sometime today. She has not heard from her husband for some weeks nor from her son who is flying.

Joyce Townshend left for Cape Town on Monday morning and I hope she is safely there by now.

Dot's last week's letter was late in arrival and Joe says that my dear all only reached them on Saturday instead of Thursday morning. If at any time my letter does not arrive on time, please return the envelope. Reg has a boring machine on the farm and the boys are thrilled watching it. Now they want to be drillers. The drill has gone down 35 feet in soft sand. The soil is so soft that ordinary fencing poles do not stand, there is no rock on the farms for miles in some parts. Dot says Blodwen's floor polish is quite a success but you have to be careful in mixing in case of fire. Dot is mixing some boot polish in order to darken the polish.

Masie brought out some Xmas presents whilst I was at Uitenhage. Amongst them was a pair of fisherman's rubber boots for Trevor. It was quite amusing to see him in them. He struts about all over the place, in the street, garden and is no end proud of himself.

Letters from Grace and Dot are to hand. Grace tells of Jean taking part in a service by reading the lesson from the pulpit and playing in a duet at two different functions in one evening. She is evidently "coming on" in the public world. They are sorry that Dot and family cannot get to them for Xmas. Evelyn writes that Lynne will be home soon and will travel with the Ambler children to Vryburg. So it seems that we are the only ones to have visitors this year. I hope that wherever you, are you all will have a very happy time.

I have received a very nice letter from Denis' Dorothea. We shall look forward to meeting her.

I must not stop to add more as there is a good deal to see to and we shall be out this evening. I am glad to find Mom and Aunt Letty quite alright after my short absence.

Much love to all from

Dad



34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It is Monday evening and as Wednesday is a public holiday, the posts will all be out of gear so perhaps I had better post on Tuesday so that you will get yours in regular time. There does not seem much to write about but no doubt I shall be able to fill my sheet as usual. To begin with, I am pleased to be able to say that Dorothy Murray is getting on first rate and is wonderfully bright and cheerful. Her husband arrived on Saturday, having been granted indefinite leave under the circumstances. The baby is growing but has to be fed by means of a fountain pen filler. Neither of us have seen the poor little mite. Both parents are very brave and are making the best of things.

Aunt Letty has gone this morning to Spielmanskop, Uncle Bertie and May having come in for her before dinner. One afternoon we walked with her to the cemetery and back. She stood the walk very well. She was sorry to see that the stones she sent from Louisvale do not look as nice as she had hoped they would do on Uncle James' grave. They are white chips but the dust and sand seems to work over them. I did not realise until looking at the headstone that I am now 14 years older than he was when he passed away.

A few evenings ago – or rather it was the afternoon – Mom had gone to a W.C.T.U. meeting and I to a Governor General's committee meeting. Mom had forgotten to take her front door key and when I got home found that she had got into the house by climbing on the stoep chair through the drawing room window. You see she is quite nimble yet.

I am sorry that I forgot to write specially to Grace and Ted for the anniversary of their wedding day. I hope they will forgive me. Grace says that Jean is blossoming out. At the Sunday School breaking up, she and another girl played a duet and then left to play the same at the Caledonian Hall. She also read the lesson from the pulpit which I do not think any of her relations have done. She has a future in store.

We are looking forward to Joe and Blodwen and children arriving on Wednesday evening about 9.30. We are trying to arrange for them to sleep here and we all go over to Derecourts for dinner. We can manage the breakfast and supper ourselves and we shall have the room. Aunt Letty is sorry not to see them. Perhaps if there is an opportunity of their going out to Fish River, they will see her there. She is not planning to go back to Graaff Reinet before about February. Aunt Letty is hoping that Mary will be able to get her holiday then and be able to travel with her. Alison has been invited to go to Florrie at Vrieda as soon after Xmas as possible. She certainly needs a good change after the anxious time they have had recently.

Lynne will be going home this week from Trixie's I think. No doubt she has been a great help to her and she has had a good time.

We have received such a nice Xmas card from Rex in Cairo, in fact we have two from him. One contains a series of views of Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre etc. On the back of each photo are flowers from the Holy Land. A few cards have already arrived and I have posted all mine so that job is off my hands. It is nice to remember old friends once a year.

Joe has been in camp over the weekend at Walmer and only has one day before starting for here. They want to return on Saturday January 2<sup>nd</sup> but can only book their seats 14 days beforehand.

The farewell social to the Weavers on Wednesday last was fairly well attended. A number of presentations were made: £20 from the congregation, a fountain pen and pencil from the Women's Auxiliary and writing set from the Young Women, Sunday School tune book from the Sunday School. A number of speeches followed. I hope they will be very happy and successful in Uitenhage. Blodwen has been asked to sing here on Sunday evening 20<sup>th</sup>. She has also been invited to be secretary to the W.A. in Uitenhage. She is on the Joint Council and is very interested in non-European work. She writes an article each week for the local paper under her own name and they are greatly appreciated. Recent ones have been on "this language of ours", music etc. She does not get paid for such but enjoys it. She has recently had published a poem on "Ou Bas"

Smuts. I have sent him a copy, which I hope he will accept. Blodwen has also composed a march to it.

The Mayor gave an unofficial opening to the new road up Oukop on 5<sup>th</sup>. There was a fair crowd there. The Council erected the loudspeaker and electric lights for the occasion. Refreshments, including braaivleis etc – no intoxicants – were also provided. Aunt Letty and Mom went up but did not stay. The Mayor and Town Clerk have gone away on holiday. The Mayor looks to be away for a month but I do not expect it will involve much extra work on me as everything in town is pretty quiet during the holidays.

Joyce got away to Cape Town on 7<sup>th</sup>. Raymond was not too well – they thought he was sickening for some other ailment but am glad to hear they arrived without incident. Aunt Eliza is managing alright but we do not like her being alone in the house for such long stretches. She seems to be better of the whooping cough. Amongst a large quantity of old newspapers she has turned out is the following which may be of some service to those of the family who suffer more or less from sleeplessness or indigestion. Here it is.

“The doctor says this is the way to go to sleep.

When into bed at night you creep  
and find it hard to fall asleep.

Your thoughts go round and round and round;  
you’re furious at the slightest sound.

Remember these things you can do;  
some may suit me and some suit you.

First, make a break, relax the mind  
in any way you feel inclined,  
some time before you “hit the hay”.

A game of cards, some quiet books,  
a walk, a talk but not on “spooks”,  
this stops the worries of the day.

Care can’t kill cats, but may harm you,  
so think out clearly what to do.

In anything that’s worrying you,  
and put it right outside your brain  
and do not think of it again.

A bath at night helps you relax  
and cease to think of income tax,  
but not too hot – that just excites –  
and don’t forget to douse the light  
before you put the curtain back;  
it may be it’s fresh air you lack.

Hot drinks, a glass of milk helps some,  
but not an overloaded “tum”,

To sleep or not to sleep’s the question,  
but no one sleeps with indigestion.”

Evelyn writes that they expect to be quiet this Xmas. The two children – Amblers are coming with Lynne from Pretoria. How nice it would be if Rex could be with them all.

Next Tuesday will be Reg’s birthday. From all accounts they are having difficulty in getting nurses for their hospital.

I will try to write again before Xmas but in case I am not in time, I do very sincerely wish you all a very happy time and may there be no accidents to mar the festivities.

Lots of love to all  
Yours affectionately,  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

It is Tuesday evening and "the time is few". It does not seem like Christmas but hope that all the same everyone will have a very happy time. Of course my letter will not reach you in time. We must thank all of you for letters, cards and gifts. Douglas is sending us a tin of Bechuanaland honey; Lynne has already sent a consignment of her famous cookies etc. Grace has sent a snap of Ted and herself which is quite good. It certainly shows that not only we are getting on in years. Dot too has sent us some of her cookies and granadillas – grown in her own garden, I presume. They travelled perfectly. The cake is being iced locally. We have received a large number of cards, quite as many as last year. Some have written expressing appreciation of the sentiments expressed.

We had a picnic supper at the Warm Bath on Saturday afternoon and the children and Joe bathed. None of the children can swim yet. We went out by taxi and the man came to fetch us about 7.30. Joe has also taken Roy and Merle and a boy from next door to the top of Oukop. They walked through the river and back and enjoyed the view.

We have had a detachment of the R.A.F. here for about a week practising night flying. They flew over the town more or less all night and often so low that it seemed as though they were on the roof. The noise was terrific and I think some of our residents would like to have objected. I went out to pay my respects to the O.C. as the Mayor was not in town. He was sleeping as he had been flying all night. They have left now but will be coming back later. It was very pretty watching the lights as they signalled to the base camp.

I developed a nasty cold last week with the usual result of losing my voice and it did not yield to treatment as quickly as I liked so I had the doctor in this morning and he thoroughly sounded me. He says my heart is not the cause of the pains I have felt in my chest but there is unmistakable signs that I have had rheumatic fever. The incessant coughing has subsided somewhat today and I hope it will soon be better.

Blodwen has had a cold but it was so far better that she was able to sing a solo in church on Sunday evening. It was much appreciated.

Today is the longest day of the year and incidentally Reg's birthday.

Did I tell you that Aunt Emmie had a fall in the street when she went to post a letter. She sprained her ankle. Some gentlemen passing at the time helped her home. Fortunately the incident did not apparently affect her heart.

Wednesday morning. It is quite dull and Joe and family were looking to go to the Warm Bath with Mr Cook but perhaps it will be put off. Joe gave a show of his pictures on Monday evening. Some of the girls who took part in the ambulance parade recently were delighted to see themselves filmed. He is going to give a show at Aunt Eliza's on Thursday evening.

Rex has sent us such a nice Xmas card from Palestine. I expect others may have had copies as well.

Later. The post has just come – after dinner – and I do not feel to have energy enough to reply to all the kind message of love that have come to hand. I do not find it easy to concentrate but will try to do better. Blodwen says I must tell you about the poem she wrote to General Smuts. I sent a copy to the General and suggested that a signed photograph of himself would be appreciated by her. Yesterday I received a nice note from the General's private secretary with thanks from the General and a signed photo. This Blodwen has had framed.

Owing to the holidays, I do not suppose any of you will get this letter before Monday next. Best wishes to all and hope you will all be well over the holidays.

Yours lovingly  
Dad

34 Dundas Street, Cradock  
as Wednesday December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1942

My dear All,

Last week I gave you short measure and I do not see any prospect of doing any better this week. Life seems to be a big rush each day. However, I will do my best.. We have had lots of cards and letters from one and another but no details of how Xmas was spent. We all went to church at 7.30 on Friday morning. There was a good congregation and the collection for the Marsh Memorial homes (Rondebosch) was about £5/8/-. We had a very nice Xmas dinner at Derecourts – poultry etc and there was no ill effects. Ginger beer, cakes etc were served on the lawn and the weather was perfect.

Joe has been very good in giving shows of his cine snaps which have interested everyone. He gave one show at Aunt Eliza's and another at Derecourts. Of course we had a show here as well. There are some very nice people staying at Derecourts and they are coming to spend the evening here tonight. Some of them were in church on Sunday morning when I took the service. I am glad to say my voice is better but I asked the congregation to come to the front so as to save straining my voice. Joe, I am sorry to say, coughs a little but I think he is better for the change. We all went out to the Warm Baths by taxi one afternoon and had a picnic supper out there. Joe and Roy and Merle walked out and back one day and took some lunch with them. I think it was rather too much for the children as they were very tired the next day. Roy can swim just a little way and as he gets more confidence, will be able to manage quite well. Mr and Mrs Cooke, Mr Thomas' friends, have very kindly taken them for some drives in their car and they have also spent some evenings at their house.

Joe and I went over to the station this morning in the hopes of seeing Denis passing through on his way home for a few days leave. Unfortunately he was not there. By the way, Denis asks me to thank those who wrote or wired their congratulations on the occasion of his engagement. He had not all your addresses.

Here is something for you to think about. Aunt Eliza sent it to me and she got it from a party in Grahamstown. It sounds quite prophetic:

The following is an inscription on a tombstone 500 years old in Essex, England.

When pictures look alive with movements free;  
When ships like fishes swim below the sea;  
Then half the world deep drenched in blood shall be.

Douglas reports good rains before Xmas and had Lynne and the two children home from school. Was expecting Arthur in a few days and hopes he will be able to get "farm" leave in February. He also mentions the possibility of he and Evelyn taking a change somewhere. We hope here.

Our figs have been very nice and the first crop is finished. The grapes are coming on but will not be ripe until the end of January I guess.

Grace says she has had a good deal of fruit. The two boys will be going into camp in January but I suppose it is only for scout training.

Wednesday morning. Dot in her last letter holds out the prospect of their paying us a visit about July next. This is something to look forward to and no doubt the time will soon fly. They were looking to have a picnic supper on their lawn with the neighbours with them. I can picture the spot and would like to see it again.

We were amused yesterday at Roy and a little friend went off on their own account to the butcher and asked for a penny chop as they wanted to have a braaivleis on their own.

We have not seen anything of the country folk except Uncle Jack, Winnie and Harvey Brown who we came across one day in the street. Petrol rations are keeping farmers at home. Perhaps we may take a taxi on Friday and visit Grass Ridge, Saltpansdrift and Retreat but it is not decided yet.

An old resident of Cradock, residing now in Pretoria, has asked the local Salvation Army to arrange for a dinner to be given to the poor of Cradock. This is to be held on Thursday at the

Victoria and I have been invited in my official capacity to attend. It certainly is a very nice gesture and I am curious as to how it is going to work out. There is none in town that has the conveniences or accommodation for providing for such a function other than an hotel. The giver is an abstainer himself.

Joe has seen an advertisement for a blacksmith instructor at an Industrial School in the Free State. It would be a much lighter job than his present work but he hesitates to put in an application for the position.

Wednesday morning. We had four of the boarders from Derecourts to spend the evening here last night. One is a widow of a Methodist minister, Mrs Reiner, who comes to Cradock occasionally for her health. The other three are a Mrs Davis and her married daughter and her husband who is in the navy and is on a few days leave. He used to work on the Railway and knows a number of people. They are going to share a house just opposite 53a Bree Street. We hope to see more of them.

Some of us may be attending the watch-night service tomorrow. The Weavers are leaving by car for Uitenhage on Friday and he is due to preach his first sermon there on Sunday morning. We shall not have any morning service for the next two Sundays.

After dinner. Only one letter today and that from Grace tells of how they spent Xmas. No doubt we shall have other letters in due course. Grace says the weather was threatening in the morning of Xmas Day but it cleared in the afternoon. They spent most of the time at the river. A crowd of visitors came to see them during the holidays and they had some tennis etc. The boys earned a little pocket money by helping in the delivery of letters etc. Needless to say Grace was very tired with all the extra work but they were all well.

We will probably go to the Warm Baths later this afternoon and have a picnic supper there. We are all asked to 29 Market Street for tomorrow afternoon. The trip to Fish River I do not think will come off. Joe's holiday will soon be over and he says by this time next week, it will seem as though it had never been.

This letter closes another volume of my "dear Alls". I fear they have not been very interesting of late but it has afforded me some pleasure in trying to keep in touch with the family from week to week. No one knows what the new year has in store for any of us but as time goes on, there are sure to be changes in one way or another. Therefore my last word is "be prepared".

May all of the family circle and those near and dear to us have much joy and happiness in the coming year.

Dad