

Letters October

Xways Ludham Norfolk
Tues Oct 3. 44

Dear Billee

Today opened well with a sharp double bang about 7 am and another more distant about a quarter to ten: but so far I haven't heard of any casualties which is not to be surprised at seeing the amount of open country about here as compared with built up areas.

I saved M a run to the village and then came back and got on with the border between the lawns. This afternoon Mrs Swanston and Vera came for a game of bridge and I don't think I've ever had such a succession of rotten hands, just followed what was led and took very few tricks. They went fairly early as Vera does not like to be on the road after dusk.

Two more interruptions during the evening and that finished Jerry's effort for today. M was out during the evening to a W.I. market stall meeting to settle on the disposition of the funds of the stall that they had in hand. They have finished up for the season which I think is a pity.

Thurs 5. 10. 44

A dismal prospect when 'M' looked out this morning, big puddles in the drive and raining heavily and I didn't get up till 11.30. 'M had the Ideal going and I made use of the hot water before dinner. M had been washing but it was not until the afternoon that she could hang things out so the Ideal and the radiator helped things out a bit.

Jerry left a card at breakfast time and another after dinner, neither of them very near. It was out of the question to do much in the garden so amused myself indoors. Another bump completed Jerry's quota for today.

Friday 6. 10. 44

I have got a bit mixed with the days and left out Wednesday but there was nothing much to relate of that day and the greater part of the day I spent indoors.

Jerry had 3 goes today.

And now to resume Friday. So far 8 p.m. I have only heard 2 efforts, one at teatime very distant. Its been a lovely day to make up for the past day or so and I have been able to do quite a good bit of work in the garden. My biggest trouble is the amount of Sorrel, the threadlike roots branch and run everywhere and in places has almost got the upper hand when the roots run into the clumps of perennials.

M has been doing some more to the coat this afternoon, the pockets seem to need a lot of wangling but the first one turned out O. K. and the other will no doubt be less trouble.

We had a caller just before teatime, a member of the Fleet Air Arm who was looking round to see if there was anywhere he could practice on a piano and continue his studies. He has passed the elementary examination and wants to take the next one. He is quite a boy, maybe 20 or 21 and very diffident. He expressed a wish to practice alone but we could not guarantee him this but fixed up for him to come on 2 afternoons a week as he is free every other afternoon.

I only noticed 1 incident today about 1.40 am

Sat 7. 10. 44

The only distraction today was some heavy distant gunfire at times, otherwise a hum-drum sort of day during which I got in a good bit outdoors and M raked in the shekels in the afternoon. The Acle siren performed during the evening but we heard nothing more. Phyllis said she heard it but it was beyond my earshot and also M's as well and I've been priding myself that my hearing was second to none but apparently it wasn't.

Sun 8. 10. 44

We were a trifle later getting up this morning and Phyllis not coming home to breakfast we had the forenoon to ourselves. 'M' was busy cooking all the morning, we had a nice bit of lamb, and just did a few things indoors and out. This afternoon we both went to church at 4pm, quite a convenient time for me but I expect it will have to be earlier than that before the winter is par.

Before going to church the box of fruit and vegetables had to be attended to, these things take up some time.

The service was cut down to 45 minutes with a 17 minute sermon, but as usual we could not follow it except for a few words at intervals. There were a fair number in the congregation and an air force officer presided at the organ, with the usual fault of a fresh player, it was too loud. Well I'll wait till tomorrow (Monday) before closing this up.

Mon 9. 10. 44

Your letter turned up this morning, You need not worry about Gertie not seeing you last weekend she realised that it was not practical politics.

So you seem to be nearer to giving up the Orchestra secretaryship. I hope it comes off and you get a little more freedom.

Things at school are a little quieter with E away and this should help you get rid of headaches. A weekend at the camp with Park should make a nice break for you and I hope you decide to go.

Must make a note of "Sunrise and Sunset" it sounds good and I like his books,

Chrysanths are getting on slowly, it has been a cold early October although no frost. My pot plants are all behind and I doubt whether I shall get such good blooms as last year. The tomatoes we sent should answer your question about them. Hope that the parcel travels safely and does not take too long about it or the mushrooms will suffer- they came from the compost heap. There were a fine lot there, lawn cuttings seem to encourage them. Thanks for cheque and note. They were quite safe and I have burnt the cheque .in order to prevent any complications

There was some gunfire just before five a.m. in the Yarmouth direction, a dull bang soon after 10 a.m. and a distant one just after 6 p.m. when Phyllis and I were having tea – "M" had gone for a bridge tea with Mutt and Jeff and Vera.

Rather strange that you should have a Bexley Heath girl at school. Well this is about all.

Cheerio and best love,

Pa

2 weeks on Saturday, I hope you will be here. We must see how things go between now and then.

M

Crossways
Ludham
Gt Yarmouth
10. 10. 44

My dear Babs,

I hope that by this time you will know just what the tomatoes etc are like, the Chrysanthemums are very late this year and so far we have not been able to pick a very nice bunch. I managed with the flowers for Sept. without buying and have since been able to help Miss B. out with Dahlias. Hope to be able to do so again next Sat. We have plenty of Chrysanths coming along and so far the weather has been very good for them. The mushrooms were a real surprise crop and all on the compost heap over the wasp's nest. They are still very busy. The House martins have gone. They all went about a week ago and on Sunday I saw a Tit very busy investigating the nest in the porch. Things seem again

to be very busy here. I hardly know what to do first some days. For about a fortnight now I have been hearing from Phyllis about another girl who is coming to Ludham but the problem of accommodation for her is too acute and for some reason, although, Mr W is waiting for him, he does not want her to come until he finds somewhere for her to live. Phyllis does not know anything about her, only hears that she is a very nice girl and very well educated. She wondered if we could manage to have her one day last week and I said I didn't see how we could squeeze her in, but on Monday she came in with a message from Mr W to know if I could put her up. if only for a week as he was anxious to get her here. Then she could perhaps find somewhere for herself. Well we agreed so today we have put up two single beds in your room and the double one in our own, and she will probably come on Thursday. As we have said to P. if she comes on that understanding we can get rid of her if things are not satisfactory, for as she does not know anything about how they may not fit in one room and more than that - we may find we don't want her. I think while I am cooking for 3, another one won't make much difference and I shall get more out of the same amount of work. So we are going to try it out.

Now about the boy who wanted to practice I felt sure that you would not mind. He seems a decent lad about 20 I should think and his home is in Harrogate. I asked him what sort of music he went in for as the piano belonged to you and you did not want any "Jazz Merchant using it. He said he never touched the stuff. He has been in this afternoon, came at 4 o/c and we had to push him off at 6. He was practising all the time. It's rather hard luck for anyone in his position, not to be able to touch an instrument for nearly a year except when he can get home. So we shall also see how that pans out.

Have you heard from Rene? I owe her a letter. Miss Broom has not heard from them since before you came home. When I was at the cottage yesterday Mrs Ainsworth called with a big basket of those lovely red apples for the pain and said they had so many they did not know what to do with them, also that they had a lot of medlars to spare. I did not see them ut she showed me the apples. The W.I. are now knitting shawls. 36" square, and they take 6 oz of wool. The coats are all finished and I must get them off as soon as I can. I have 11 shawls in the making, They are very simple, 162 stitches and their pattern was a garter stitch border of 12 stitches and the rest 3 plain and 3 purl but we are doing them basket stitch, 3p. 3 purl reversed and that looks much nicer. I don't find so far that it makes any difference to the M. k. work.

The C. Council meeting is on Friday next and when I met Mr A the other morning he actually stopped to tell me so. I took the opportunity to tell him that I hoped to be relieved of the office at the end of the year, of course he said, no, I don't want to lose you and why did I want to give it up? I told him that on the whole the Ludham people were very conservative and liked to keep things in their own hands, he said yes he knew. "The Ludham people had a lot to learn and he was going to teach them." For that reason he was going to let the affairs of the Church get into a clique so he hoped I would carry on. Well that's that and it does not look much like closing that job at present.

Miss Grimes has finished up and in a very discontented frame of mind as far as the Church people are concerned. She has never got over the refusal to increase her Salary. She came to see me and ask me if there should be any mention of the Church giving her a present would I tell them that I did not agree with that kind of thing and should be very hurt if anything was offered to her. I have since heard from Nurse that she would probably send it back if they gave her anything. I mentioned it to Mr A and he said it did not rest with Miss G if the P.C.C. chose to do it. So again, 'that's that.' Nevertheless they are in a bad way and are really being sold up on Thursday. She doesn't know where she is going. I am very sorry for her for I don't think she will get the teaching post she talks about very easily. Her manner is so strange, that will put people off I am sure. By the way, Ainsworth said, "I wish your daughter was at home." I laughed and said, "Yes, so do I."

Well 8.20 and time to see about supper. P. helps me wash up and goes to bed just after nine and then by the time I pack her breakfast and look round its time for us to go. for we get up round about 7 so as to get the breakfast in good time with dinner at 12, so,

Much love and a kiss

Mama

Crossways Ludham
Gt. Yarmouth Norfolk
Tues Oct 10th 1944

Dear Billee

Today was mainly taken up indoors and the fruit on the top shelf was successfully taken down and stowed on the bottom of the cupboard in the larder and a lot of empty bottles packed up ready for Thrower to take back, 1/2d being allowed and a sum of 3/- being credited in all. Our Fleet Air Arm had turned up for the practice but instead of coming at 3 it was 4 o'clock before he turned up and it was a job to get him off by teatime. I did find time to plant out a row of cabbages but that was my effort in the garden

Vera is engineering a whist drive in aid of the W.I. friends and asked me to do 4 posters for her. I started this evening but our lights are not right for that game and I postponed operations till daylight.

Jerry sent one over just before 6 o'clock this evening just to keep us guessing I suppose.

Wed Oct 11. 44

One before and one after was Jerry's effort today. It was a nice bright, warm, (for Oct) morning and as the grass was fairly dry I cut the side lawn for the last time this year, I hope. Took me about an hour and I was not averse to coming indoors and looking at the "Times". This afternoon I did the 4 posters for Vera but was not too pleased with the result, not having the best materials for the job, but they don't look too bad if not inspected closely.

The weather depreciated all day and by the evening there was half a gale blowing and rain driving in the back door so put up the shutter to keep the wet out. It was a boisterous evening but luckily not cold. "M" is anxious to change over rooms before the new girl comes.

Thur Oct 12. 44

"M" was up about 6 o'clock this morning in order to change over and had best part finished the job by breakfast time, only a few things for me to see to or help her with. It's not much of a morning for the garden and by the afternoon the rain and the wind renewed its efforts so the total in the garden was nil.

The new girl turned up this afternoon – was supposed to get here by the 2 Bus, but was put down by the Dog and had to cadge a lift on a trailer for her luggage and did not get here till after three. She seems at first sight to be quite decent a girl, her father is master of a Pacific Steam Navigation Cos boat and sails from Liverpool. She is about as tall as Phyllis but quite a different complexion being dark with a Mediterranean type of features. If she gets on with Phyllis she should not make much difference to us. Unlike chatterbox Phyllis she is quiet but not unduly reserved.

Fri 13. 10, 44

So far today there has been no interruption but we do not usually get any at night.

Fiest item. Your letter came this morning and I see that you have dated it Oct 8, the postmark is Oct 10 5.45 am so it did not take long getting here only 3 days. We were very interested in your account of your visit to the Whones (?). I guess that there must have been some scramble when you appeared, apparently, they did not expect visitors on Saturday afternoon. Your remarks about her appetite are specially good. She has apparently told them about the amount she gets to eat here. It's a bit of a puzzle sometimes to know what to get to satisfy her. As regards Peter, an inferiority complex is a bit of a drawback on a youngster but he seems to have found a suitable niche. It would be just as well if Phyllis wrote herself about Books on Physics.

There are several points which "M" will deal with when she next writes. Betty Hearle, that is the new girl, turned out this morning for the farm, but came away early in order to go to Stalham

about Food cards etc. She borrowed Phyllis's bike and when she got back about 12.30, she flopped out in a dead faint. 'M' got her to bed and she stayed there till teatime and now 7.30 pm has gone to bed as she felt like fainting again. She does not attach much importance to it, her sister was the same but has grown out of it now. 'M' is going to Church Council meeting this evening. Its blowing hard and raining. Phyllis is in the lounge at the piano.

No more now,

Cheerio and best love

Pa

Crossways Ludham
Gt Yarmouth Norfolk
Sun 15. 10. 44

Dear Billee

So Betty's gone and that episode has ended. She went to see Dr Brown on Saturday evening and he gave her a certificate to give to the Land Army her being unfit for duty and told her she was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, a statement probably based on her account of the interview that she had with her own doctor before coming here. She has packed up all her belongings and went by the 3. 0 Bus where she was to meet her sister and going on to Ryburgh near Fakenham where she and her sister – also in the Land Army – had billets Nothing much more today – M went to Church at 4 p.m. but I stayed at home.

Mon 16. 10. 44

A wretched day and could do nothing outdoors so sorted out some small shallots for 'M' to pickle as Phyllis professed a liking for them. Phyllis puts in a good long day at the farm leaving here before 6 a.m. and today not getting back before 6.20 p.m. but she is always cheerful about it all and seems quite content to amuse herself during the evening, which is just as well seeing that there is nothing else, for her to do.

As we shall fall back on the old square oil stove in the cold weather and there is no place in the kitchen to put it except beside the Ideal and the door, I have contrived and fixed a draught screen in the hopes of saving the glass in the front door from cracking in the cold draught.

Tues 17. 10. 44

Another wretched day and I did not get up till 11.30, my garden operations are getting somewhat behind and I hope we shall get some better samples soon. Dodging the rain, or the heavy rain I should say, I took a parcel of the pink knitting to post this afternoon. Fortunately I did not get it very wet or the brown paper wrapping would have suffered. We went over to the Mattocks this evening. They both had colds and Madge did not look very fit when it got near 11 o'clock so we left the last rubber unfinished and came home. I think I had about the worst hands that I have had during the evening.

Wed 18. 10. 44

We have been quiet here for about a week and "M" decided that it was good enough to get back to her own bed and had enough shelter. I must say there is not much room for two in there.

The weather has been kindlier today and I have managed to plant some tulips and Crocus although the ground was almost too wet, but the time had come when they had to be seen to. As Evans has a birthday shortly I made this an excuse to write him a note just to show that I had not forgotten him.

Thur 19. 10. 44

After another downpour it was not fit to get on the ground, and I did not mind giving up the afternoon to Bridge when Mutt and Jeff paid us a visit. Just the reverse of Tuesday I had the most tremendous luck and was on the winning side of each of the 3 rubbers and over 2000 up at the finish.

Fri 20. 10. 44

Another choice sample of weather indoors all day except to go to the post. Phyllis is experiencing the joys of farm life in winter, came home just before dinner smothered in mud having fallen down into the mud at a cattle gate and you know what they are like in wet weather. Luckily, we had the Ideal going and she was able to have a hot bath and put her things to soak.

Your letter came this morning. It looks as though you were well out of the Camp at the weekend. Poor F and W. As things are at present we shall be very pleased to see you at half term but as things were a short time ago I should probably advised you against the journey.

Undoubtedly Phyllis does rattle on nineteen to the dozen. Did you get to the bottom of her at school sometimes with her Yorkshire accent. It's a job to understand her, she gabbles on so quickly' Perhaps its Wrights cows that make her so voluble nowadays. We have not seen anything of our pianist for some days now but expect that he will turn up again shortly.

Well that's all this time.

Cheerio and best love

Pa

Xways Ludham Norfolk

Sat 21. 10. 44

Dear Billee

After yesterday's rain it was not fit to do much on the ground, and in the afternoon I was busy in anticipation of frost which would damage pot plants. It will be a puzzle to know where to put things now that your bedroom is occupied and I don't want to have much in the lounge in anticipation of your homecoming at half term. I was glad to be able to get outside in the afternoon and leave it clear indoors for 'M' and war savings.

I have just finished "The Saga of the Cliffs by E. L. Laurie Long, quite a good yarn and have fallen back on one of your travel books, "South of the Clouds" which I find I have not read and is quite a good description of Chinese scenes.

Sunday 22. 10. 44

I am sorry to say that "M" has developed a cold and cough for which she blames Mattocks both of whom had bad colds when they invited us over there: consequently, she did not go to Church at 8 am as she had intended and we both stayed at home all day. Ainsworth is supposed to have said recently that it did not matter about the old ones going to Church, it was the young ones that mattered, so we are apparently absolved according to his way of thinking.

Phyllis is frequently changed about to different sheds and at times takes a second breakfast with her. I like this better as its not too convenient to have her come in at 9.20 or 10 or even after that and some cooking to do at times.

Monday 23. 10. 44

We had a nice letter from our pianist's mother this morning and apparently his parents are in a comfortable position at Harrogate where they live. It's nice to have had such a letter and it gives us a better insight for he hasn't much to say for himself and is very retiring although he always wants to know if there is anything he can do for "M". I think he might be introduced to the pump it would be quite a useful contribution to the household chores.

It's another wretched day "M" went up to the village this morning and posted the Iris pods. As they were not quite dry they should travel well and they should be hung upside down for the stems to dry and stiffen before being used in an upright position but perhaps you know all that. Still raining this afternoon but the wind is inclined to veer. I hope it does not clear during the night and give us a frost. Can do without that for a day or two yet.

'M' has been trying to finish off the coat but its so dull and dreary, and artificial light does not compensate for daylight.

Will you try and see what you can do about diaries? I prefer a day to a page but if not obtainable shall have to be content as last year with two days per page. 'M' also wants one.

Tues 24. 10. 44

A more promising morning, but it is still damp everywhere. Your letter came this morning. I'm sorry that you feel I've neglected you but somehow I seem to wait for yours to reply to and discover that I can't get one to you before the weekend. Sometimes an engrossing library book is answerable for it but not often. Sorry about the Angel and hope the Bull will be more accommodating and hope that Joyce will be able to fit it in.

So that's that as regards the Orchestra business. We had a letter from Gertie this morning, in a more cheerful strain than recently. Old lady Stevens has died and Gertie has the insurance money and is once again in funds and returns the £3 I lent her when they moved and they took over the lino from Shafto's.

I don't know of much more to tell except that "M" still is coughing and wonders whether she will be better before you get here. She is afraid that you might catch it.

Cheerio and best love

Pa