

## LETTERS DECEMBER

Friday 1. 12. 44

The same old tale indoors – we have only had two days in November without rain. Have been sawing up logs for the fire and cutting up kindling.

Leon came about 6.30 this evening and stayed till about 8.15. He's a quiet sort of fish and it's difficult to keep any sort of conversation going. One thing he's really proud of and that is his tobacco pipe, quite a new thing for him and of course all sorts of gadgets including lighter, some papers with which to make cartridges to fit the bowl and a companion to do various things to the tobacco in course of being smoked. I smiled and wondered whether he will think all these things necessary when he has been smoking as long as I have.

Sat 2. 12.44

A little bit better underfoot after a day without rain (Friday), but not fit for much and all I did was to dig some leeks for dinner and take up a couple of Chrysanthus and put in pots. We have had a lovely lot of blooms in the garden and should have liked to send you some, but a week knocking about in the Post would just about finish them before you got them.

I sawed up another lot of logs and was just clearing up when Thrower arrived with seven or eight wooden! boxes rarely seen nowadays.

Phyllis has had her half day off and went to Norwich ostensibly for shopping but all the shopping we saw was a new outer cover for her bike. We were hoping that she would not be back until 8 o'clock bus but tea was hanging about till 7 o'clock.

Your letter came on Friday, glad to hear that you had a pleasant weekend at Harrogate and found them nice people. In the course of conversation with Leon, I asked him how and why he picked on x rays. He said that it was the first place at which he made enquiries and that he had only seen x rays twice before and as you would expect he did not enlarge and I didn't want to appear too inquisitive. We left it at that and got no clear cut idea of his impressions. So Leon and his father went out shooting. You don't say what their bag was.

You look like having a full time job before Xmas – what with parties etc I expect that you will be quite glad to be at X ways after it all. We hear that Nell has left Adcocks after about a month and I'm not surprised that she did not last long. Mr A. I'm afraid will have a job to get a suitable successor.

Sun 3. 12. 44

Being Advent Sunday, we made an effort and went to 8 o'clock service but had to forego a shave which did not matter a great deal as the Church was only lighted in the chancel and we went into the first seat by the organ. Could not see a prayer book of course and heard very little of the service.

It's been a day of moods, bright clear intervals with heavy gusty showers from the west. "M" was going to Church at 4 but a heavy shower put paid to that. She went over to Mattocks before tea and learned the news that they had fixed up to go North on Thursday week. "M" says that Sally almost cried about it. They are very foolish to go but the invitation is for 3 months if they like to stay as long. Of course they will leave their lodgers there and I hope everything goes O. K.

Shortly before our tea I took advantage of a bright interval to go up to Brooks and fix up with Joyce to go over to Hemsby and pick up a few things as we shall need some extra bed clothes. C.O.G. will have the double bed in the dining room and for the few days that they are here it will be a bit congested, but no more than when we had an Officer billeted here. I arranged that we should go to Hemsby on Tuesday afternoon and hope that it will be a better day than we have had lately.

Phyllis' part time on the land has come to an early end, but she may go back again before long. She talks of going to Reading next week end, going there on Saturday and coming back on Sunday the idea being to go to a concert on Saturday evening.

There must be something very seductive about the lounge this evening – I nearly went to sleep after tea and both P1 and P3 did have a short nap. The wind howls and beats against the windows and it sounds like winter but its not too cold and I don't think we shall have snow, hope not at any rate. Apropos of your offer for Xmas of cloches I may add one or two things which would be acceptable, shirt (coupons would be provided), a chopper (now that I have something to chop) , and 6" flower pots and Whitakers Almanac, any of which could wait until you come home.

I forgot to tell you that Leon gave me a book nicely bound "The Research Magnificent a novel by H.G. Wells, a queer yarn so far as I have got. "M" has got farther than I and says that its still queer.

Cheerio and best love

Pa

Crossways Ludham Norfolk  
Mon 4.12. 44

Dear Billee

There's nothing much that I can relate of today. Did various odd things and gardening of a very limited nature.

M went to Norwich by the 2'o clock bus and arrived back here shortly after 6. In getting out of the bus she slipped and sat down on the steps - result a bruise on the calf and a good thing that it wasn't on the shin and I hope that the blue will soon fade away.

Tues 5. 12. 44

A much nicer day, bright sunshine mostly and a very drying west wind, rather searching and boisterous.

I went to the village and brought back the weekly order as we should be out at Thrower's usual time for bringing. It was a good load by the time I reached the top of the rise to Xways. Joyce came with the car at 2.30 and we set off for Hemsby. The car looked like a moving job when we came back, Blankets, Quilts etc piled on the seat surmounted by a couple of chairs secured to the side of the car with string. On the floor were saucepans, rolling pin, a rug, a basket with some plates and cutlery and other things.

We went up the field road when Joyce started to turn round to come back to the car stuck on the greasy surface and she had to gather rough grass – luckily there was plenty of it – before she could check the rear wheel and get the car moving backwards and once the car was back at the gate we soon loaded up and set off.- the whole business took about 1 hr 20 minutes so we didn't do badly and got in at 5 minutes to four, had a cup of tea and discussed various matters before blackout and tea,

It was almost cloudless on the way home, one of the best days for a long time but there's a lot of drying up to be done yet.

Your letter came this morning.

Leon didn't mention anything about your cough or voice but he doesn't say much about anything.

I think that I have mentioned about C and G coming for Xmas and all being well they will come on Friday for 6 days. I don't envy them their journey. The dining room of course will have to be made their bedroom as we did before.

Mattocks and the baby – everything was OK at first but the child is teething and cries a lot.

Wed 6. 12. 44

So far we have not seen anything of the parcel you wrote about but it may take anytime up to a week theses days. How long it would be required nearer Xmas I'm afraid to guess.

A lovely morning which tempted M to do a bit of washing but it clouded over and things had to be brought in half dry. It's a curious thing but every time lately that Vera has been here or we have been there it rained. She came to see M this afternoon to discuss W.I affairs and it rained again.

Have been shifting Chrysanthus in pots round and cutting down some that are beginning to be past their best and brought others indoors to save putting them in the Garage at nights. We have a lovely lot and wish we could get some to you but in the present state of the parcel post it is not a sound proposition.

I suppose you have heard that the over 70s are to be allowed an extra ration of tea 1 oz each and we have sent off our applications. If we don't want it there are several others who would be glad of it.

P3 is still with the cows and doesn't seem to get much general farm experience. She has developed a cold in the head and came in at tea time with her head soaking wet and bedraggled. She doesn't seem to own a hat. Well I don't think of anything more to say and there's not much happens in Ludham.

P.S. Your letter from Rene is enclosed as requested. Dick's letter enclosed which you can return.

Cheerio and best love

Pa

Crossways Ludham Norfolk

Thur 7. 12. 44

Dear Billee

The collection of boxes that Thrower brought will keep me amused for some time on days when outdoors is too inclement for outdoor work. I made some progress in cutting up for firewood today instead of being outdoors in the strong cold wind and got on with it in the garage which by the way leaks like a sieve except on the North side. Glad to have part of it waterproof for it does not seem as though anything but the very essentials can be done. I'm wondering how long the hot water tank will last out

Leon came in this afternoon at four instead of at two o'clock as he had said he would, did a lot of strumming and had tea and settled himself down, made no more attempt at practising until 'M' shooed him off to do so.

He put in about half an hour and then came back to the dining room – found it a bit cold I expect. It was a difficult job to keep up a conversation and there he stood for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour. "M" asked him to sit down but he put on his coat and said he was going but stood there almost speechless for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour with his coat on. It was a tense situation and I felt like shouting or doing something desperate. Finally he departed about 8.50 and we had a good laugh after.

Fri 8. 12. 44

A day or two ago a Captain Frances called on the look out for a bath and it and it was fixed up for him to come this afternoon about 5.30. He seemed a jolly sort of a fellow and talked nineteen to the dozen, it was a job to get a word in.

He was one of the regular army and had been sent to Ludham after an illness to recuperate and didn't know where he might go. He was called to the colours for the present war and between soldiering he had been selling 1000 houses so you can guess that he was able to talk and in a very few minutes had told us what must have been half his life. I can't remember half he said. He was here about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour and is coming again next week. The position as regards batmen is 1 to 7 so he couldn't send his batman to pump – said he had to clean his own boots and polish his own buttons. I showed him how to work the pump etc and left him to it, but I don't think I ever saw anyone more awkward at the pump

There's nothing much else to tell today, just the humdrum routine, no gardening. 'M' having a good clean up all round this morning and went to the village in the afternoon

P3 has been getting her bike in order today ready for the trip to Wroxham and thence by train to London and Reading. She is due back on Sunday evening. She has a nasty cold in the head and I don't think she is any better off for having got her hair so wet in the rain. Her hair looks handsome at times when she comes in out of the rain.

Sat 9. 12. 44

We seem to be getting a series of white frosts and this morning it was quite hard on the top and tender things in the garden have succumbed at last. Our lavish display of Chrysanthus indoors has about come to an end with blooms in the garden nipped, we may get a few blackened ones later on if no more sharp frosts are experienced, otherwise I shall have to depend on plants that I lifted and which have a nightly shelter in the garage. One big pot full should be just about right for Xmas and Arums and Cyclamen are a bit slow but may give a flower or two.

I went up to Riches this morning for 7 lbs of eating apples but had to pay 6d per lb which is cheaper than shop prices.

Sun 10. 12. 44

We are having a quiet lazy day. P3 is away and we are free until she comes back at some unknown time. She had a deal of trouble with her bike in order to get it fit to take her to Wroxham on Monday morning. Whether it was or not we don't know, but she did not come back so concluded that she got there on her bike or somehow else.

It's a miserable, overcast rainy afternoon and I am writing this in the half dark and hope to catch this afternoon's post. "M" is writing to you but whether in time to enclose with this I don't know and doubt it as she is at this moment doing a spot of dusting etc about the house and it's nearly 4 o'clock.

Well that's about the lot this time

So cheerio Xmas is coming  
and best love from  
Pa

Crossways Ludham Norfolk  
Mon 11. 12. 44

Dear Billee

Leon paid us another visit this afternoon and from 4 to 5.30 stuck it out in the cold lounge at the piano. He must be very enthusiastic over it or he does not feel the cold as older folk do, perhaps it's a bit of both. M took him in a cup of tea and some toast but it was not long before he was leaving his tea in the Dining Room. Shortly after tea I asked him whether he wanted to practice anymore but he said he was going. His process lasted from about 6.45 to 8.15 but he did not stand up speechless this time although it was difficult to get him to talk.

Today I brought in some more Chrysanthus and we look like having a good show for Xmas. Arums are pushing up but I doubt if they will be out till the New Year. Cyclamen also are throwing up buds but they will need a little more time yet. ....

Its not been too warm today but there was a fair bit of sun in the morning.

Tues 12. 12. 44

Nothing much else to tell you today. I didn't get up until 11.30. "M" went over to Mattocks for a farewell chow chow. I don't envy them the journey especially the car trip to Norwich in the early morning. Before daylight.

Wed 13. 12. 44

This is a welcome date as it is the earliest (by GMT) sunrise of the winter and we shall soon be able to notice the longer afternoons.

Sally came over this morning and brought about a stone of apples. I had asked for the loan of their barrow whilst they were away and Sally wheeled it over with the basket of apples. I wondered whatever the noise was as she came by the kitchen window however the apples are very acceptable and I shall be able to find good use of the barrow

Your letter came this morning, thank you muchly for the enclosures.

I went to Brooks about the car and fixed that up for you. Poor Joyce is getting plenty of early and late calls just now and wished that the Mattocks were going at a more reasonable time on Thursday morning. Joyce will ring up and find out how late the train is running and the only complication now will be fog and I must get a new battery for my torch in case it is wanted. I did this last Xmas time and fortunately there was no fog.

I'm sorry to hear of your indisposition and hope that by now you are well on the way to recovery. It certainly sounds like gastric flu. I have had a similar attack years ago. It may have been water but I doubt it.

It will be nice for you to visit the Whones again. P3 at the present time is struggling with correspondence.

As regards diaries I shall have to be content with the most spacious that you can get and a desk diary might be possible if a pocket one is not procurable but don't want a large one otherwise shall have to fall back on note books as I did a year or two ago.

You are unlucky with snow. We have been free here so far although its been almost cold enough today 37 max 31 min

As regards "M" and the bus, I don't think there will be any complications now and she is quite optimistic about it.

I think that we have gathered about the last of the Chrysanthms outdoors and shall have to depend on Pat Stuff from now onward. The next thing will be propagation as soon as the stools can be persuaded to send up suitable cuttings. I have two fresh ones this year – one from Brooks, a large chestnut and orange reverse single and a large deep red crimson from Miss Broom. Shall have to discard some of the red ones and that's about the lot

Cheerio and best love  
Pa

Mozart String Quintette G Minor  
Mozart Quartette she has G major 1  
2 D “  
1 “ minor

Crossways  
Ludham  
Gt Yarmouth  
13. 12. 44

My dear Babs

Above you will see what Phyllis says about Score or Music. The first named is a Score and the rest is the Mozart Quartette that she has so if you get any other music ..... never mind I'm wrong, they are all scores. I had a hard job to drag it out of her. About the diaries I don't think 3 to 4 days would be much good, so shall have to fall back on notebooks again for if your Mr Bentley can't get them we are not likely to be able to. So sorry to hear about last week end. I hope by now you have quite got the better of it.; you ought to have had a little time off it seems. I wonder what really was the cause of it. I wanted to write to Alice before next weekend and tell her that as the weather has been so

bad, Pa thinks it will be better to leave the plants till the spring but they shall have them then, if they have not heard from us will you give them the message.

Madge and Sally are off in the morning. I hope they have a better day for travelling then today has been, very foggy and the temp: round about 37 deg. all day. A most miserable day. Pa is writing so I don't think there is anything more now.

Much love and a kiss  
Mama