

Crossways Ludham Norfolk  
Fri 4. 2. 44

Dear Billee

Its been an awful day wind and rain and hail with a light amount of snow to greet me when I looked out, and the kind of day when one kept in out of the cold keen N.W. wind, however, I did the village trip this morning and called in at Newtons to order some coke and paraffin. I was told that he had not been able to get the small coke that I use but he would try again, on Tuesday when he goes to Norwich but I'm glad that there is no stint of paraffin but surprised about the coke after the BBC announcement and the statement in the papers. A larger coke is available but I dont want the breaking up job and I've only got enough for one days firing.

As a result of not being in the garden we had tea for the first time before blacking out and soon shall be able to have tea in daylight for some time to come.

Have at last written the projected letter to Bert in Canada and shall be curious to see what his reply is – that is of course if he is a good correspondent.

Sat 5. 2. 44

Another day almost the same as yesterday but less boisterous in the afternoon and I braved the weather in the afternoon whilst 'M' was taking in the war savings but got out of the wind as much as possible and put down a bit of edging to the bed under your window using some of the broken tiles which came down when the bomb fell, did not stick it out very long and braved one light shower of hail and by coming in early we had tea again before blackout.

Sun 6. 2. 44

M was energetic enough to go to early service this morning but I went off to sleep again for 40 minutes. It was not a bad morning although so cold but not freezing, the wind cold and cutting.

We both went to Church in the afternoon but it was cold and overcast and the Church very cold to sit in for an hour. The man from Catfield took the service and an army chaplain officiated early.

Have heard no word about a new incumbent but there is a notice on the Church door stating that the Rural Dean and the Churchwardens were carrying on in lieu of the Vicar and C.Ws.

M says that she has not forgotten the rug book but cannot come across it just yet, but hopes to find it shortly.

We have been talking about your half term holiday, not quite sure when it is, and also wondering whether it is really worth your while to have a couple of days taken up with the journey with its attendant discomfort. not that we don't want you to come but for your own comforts sake and have two more days rest in Keighley, but perhaps if you stay put you will get busy on something or other. So there you are you must make your own decision.

I am enclosing a letter M had on Saturday, along with yours, a probable explanation Is that the book club leaflet was left on the book. I suppose Aden is about 5000 miles by sea, out of the war at present but anything but a salubrious place to be stationed at.

Sorry to hear your report about Steer and hope that her brightness was not forced as you imagine, no doubt she was very pleased to see you.

I should say that it was a good thing that Miss E. did not catch your firewatchers (dodgers)

The gift fund is a very good thing but let others have some goodies.

I see the diaries cost a total of 5/2½ but I don't suppose that you will be broke before you come home.

'M' has 16 Knitters now and only 4oz of wool in reserve.

The war savings group has increased by 22 since the end of the year including 8 landgirls from Ludham Hall who started on Saturday. After what you say I will give the electric clock another trial, the rest may have done it good.

I do not expect anything from you on Monday but will not seal up meanwhile.

Cheerio and best love Pa

Xways Ludham Norfolk  
Thur Feb 10 1944

Dear Billee

We've had a sample of what the weather can do today. Rain, Hail, Sleet, Snow and a biting north wind, but by the time I went up to the village it had eased up somewhat and by the afternoon it was fair with a slight shower of hail now and again, not bad enough to prevent Miss Parsons and Mrs Swanston coming for a game of bridge. We changed partners and also changed luck, no pone was much up at the finish. They came soon after 3 and departed before dark. Miss P is so nervous of being on the road except in daylight.

We moved into the lounge as there was more room there and a decidedly warmer atmosphere. It made a change for us instead of being in one room always.

Fri 11. 2. 44

Much better today with more sunshine and less wind and I did quite a spot out in the garden mainly weeding and making up the path round the kitchen garden.

Mrs Swanson called during the afternoon and brought a pair of Kippers presumably in return for the 3 Savoys that I gave her and a potful of the Sedum which I pinched at Boscastle some time ago.

Mr England called during the evening to have a talk to 'M' about the Salute the Soldiers campaign – about the Target and forming a committee - in the end they decided to leave it over for a week or two and see how events in this district turn out.

Bills have been put up in Potter to say that people of the village may be required to house Evacuees from Yarmouth and Norwich whatever that may mean, but no date was mentioned.

Sat 12. 2. 44

I went to Ludham this morning. M seemed to have such a lot to do, but it gave me very little time for digging, but I don't mind doing short spells, the long ones are too tiring. Whilst she had her usual Sat afternoon Session I had a clear run in the garden and got through a nice bit of digging but was glad to change over to a lighter job of cutting down Michaelmas daisy sticks for spills.

Mrs Smallwood had a look round the garden and took away a Savoy and a bunch of Marigolds. Just fancy picking a bunch of flowers in February.

Sun 13. 2. 44

Had another lazy fit this morning and laid in till about 12.20. Had been a long time falling to sleep and had been awake when 'M' shouted to me "There's a bomb." As I was awake

and heard nothing we concluded that she must have been dreaming. It was well after 2a.m. before I went to sleep and left the light on. Woke again 7.20. Could have got up well then but after going to sleep again felt as heavy as lead when the alarm went down at 8 am.

The weather has strangely enough been improving all day notwithstanding the shift in wind from N right round to South and a slowly moving barometer, an unusual combination of circumstances.

M went to Church this afternoon, an army Chaplain took the service, have heard nothing yet about a successor to Ted.

Your letter came Saturday morning. There isn't much to reply to. Shall be glad to know what arrangements you have made for getting here this coming half term and will arrange with Brooks accordingly.

8p.m. Will adjourn and read a bit more of "Land From the Waters by Doreen Wallace a very readable tale about the draining of the fen country, years and years ago.

During the latter part of the 9 o'clock news I could hear the distant rumble of guns and went into the lounge to see if I could see anything. The first thing that met my eyes was some bright sparks falling to the ground in the direction of Ludham Hall. As this is also the direction of London I concluded that I saw one of the destroyed machines come down. I'm afraid that C and G had an uncomfortable time.

Mon 14. 2. 44

Its too soon to have heard from Welling but we shall probably get a note from them then nothing very special today. "M" has been cleaning windows. The bright sun yesterday induced this, otherwise invisible in Sundays bright light, very much so. I took the long broom and waged war on spiders. It wants a bright sunny day for this job. The ground is drying out nicely and digging was a less laborious job today. I quite enjoyed doing a bit this afternoon.

9.30 So far no barrage but there's time yet before the moon comes up. Listened to the instalment of Sense and Sensibility and then to an interesting talk by Vernon Bartlett on refugees.

A quiet night.

Tues 15. 2. 44

Your letter came this morning as usual, but nothing from Welling so no news is good news. There's nothing in yours to need a detailed reply, but its very sad about Steer. Am just getting ready to go and post this .....in the village.

Cheerio and best love

Crossways  
Ludham  
Gt Yarmouth  
19<sup>th</sup> Wed. a.m.

My dear Babs.

Pa will have given you all the news there is. I hope by now you will have got the P'cl posted last Thursday. I had not noticed the cello fitment or could easily have put it in that parcel. I don't feel up to much yet but am hoping to feel better before Pa starts his do, for he will be lucky if he escapes. There is a fine lot of washing and housework piling up for I have done nothing practically since you left last Monday week. Anyhow the weather is better today because the fog has cleared and we have seen the sun the first time for some days.

Wasn't it kind of Mrs Mattocks to come along and they are lovely eggs she brought all laid on Monday she said and she told me not to go without. She could always manage to spare a few now that the birds had started to lay again. It's a long time since Ive had so many eggs in the place. I hear that someone paid 12/- for 6 at the W.I. W. Drive last week. I am

sending on to Workington an Airgraph letter from Capt. Gowing which Pa found in the scullery at Braeside and I wonder if it means he is coming back, as Mrs M told me Madge had written that they had heard from him at Xmas, and I also heard that there were some odd 12 SLI. back from the 2<sup>nd</sup> front. I wonder if its right. What Joyce said was right and Ludham is full up again. Mrs A has to find another Canteen Sec and asked Miss Brown!! To take it on. She refused. I heard nothing but Canteen grumbles last Sat. aft. It's a wonder my a/cs. were all clear when I checked up. I've already done just about £130 this year.

When I send the other two pair of knickers I will put the cello stand in with them. This is all now as Pa is going up to post.

Much love and a kiss  
Mama

Let us know about the diaries when you write again.

Crossways Ludham Norfolk  
Wed 23 2. 44

Dear Billee,

I came in and settled down by the fire, when I had got back from Wroxham and did not feel too energetic but summoned up enough courage to go .... The wood to saw up the tree trunk lying there. My saw wasn't too good and at the end of an hour and a half I had got one log off. Not a very profitable operation. It was nearly five when I had cut the piece off and not wishing to have much more similar fun I packed up and came in to an early tea. Shall have to see the policemans son and get the saw sharpened and set before trying any more at that game.

After the news this evening there was some activity and some distant firing so we did not hurry to bed and it seemed all quiet by 11.0 so in another half hour we went off to bed and hoped that C&G were not too much troubled.

Thur 24. 2. 44

M went to the post office this morning and posted 3 parcels and I went up later with the one for Miss S. with sprouts and onions. It's a lovely day here but cold and I was not too anxious to face the weather but the sunshine was inviting and I put in an hour before dinner.

This afternoon 'M' went to the W.I. and the pictures and talk. I did not go it was too early for me 2.30 so I stayed at home and did a job to the oil stove which smoked up this morning and deposited blacks all over the kitchen. I think I have found the cause of the trouble, we don't want to be without it. Did a bit of tree pruning until 5 o'clock and came in soon after. M had been home some time, had brought Mrs Vidler in to have a cup of tea. Mrs V soon went when I put in an appearance and we settled down to proper tea and 6 p.m. news.

Don't know yet what Madge and Sally are doing but another big parcel came by post this morning addressed c/o Mrs Goody.

To come back to my own pen and perhaps I can keep a straighter line.

There was a certain amount of distant noises after supper and we delayed going to bed for a time but nothing developed and we were soon asleep.

Fri 25. 2. 44

'M' found a good deal to do this morning, had affairs of War Savings to attend to and also wanted to go round to the farm in order to find out what Madge and Sally were doing. I took

the latter job from her shoulders and on my way left my saw at the policemen's house to be sharpened.

Madge and Sally are coming back on Wednesday next and to occupy the house against emergencies. M had a fresh 3lb of wool today, navy blue and not the nice maroon, but I understand that the blue wool is not so acceptable as the maroon, perhaps more of the latter will come along later.

It has been a dreary day overcast and a north wind and I've not felt like facing it out in the garden.

The oil stove is no better for my treatment yesterday and it will be a bit of a blow if it has to be scrapped, but I'll have another try to get it right. The square one is not nearly as useful to us in the kitchen.

So it looks as if Civil Service pensioners are going to get something at last but it's a very complicated arrangement and I must study the article in the Times today but by the time they deduct income tax it will be pretty well whittled down. Still every little helps, and I expect my pension papers (now due) when they arrive will show the variation.

I'm sorry for C. and G. they must be having a rotten time just lately but Jerry is losing a lot of machines lately and the losses must tell before long.

M says she saw the possible candidate for St Catherines and was not too much impressed. The lady she says looked about as important as the Rev F.s wife at St John's Welling.

No report of Jerry over here tonight but some distant detonations made the doors rattle and we wondered what was coming next.

Sat 26.2.44

Your P.C. and a letter from Gertie came this morning. Glad to hear that you were not hung up at the end of your journey. I am enclosing the letter from G. you will no doubt be glad to read it.

Nothing much to tell today. Its raining and a little less cold and no wind.

Shall have a trip to the village and post this on my way for milk etc.

Cheerio and best love Pa

Xways Ludham Norfolk

Sat 26. 2. 44

Dear Billee

There's nothing much to say today. M had her usual this afternoon lost the run of a £10 note. Couldn't make it out anyhow so must see how it works out – if it does – next Saturday.

Not much weather for the garden so got Ideal going and had a nice hot bath, but cannot turn down the boiler furnace yet and of course it burnt out during the night again although I had all the dampers on.

Sun 27. 2. 44

We got going in good time this morning and serenely stumped off for Church for 11 am, Service, only to find that the church parade was timed for 10.30 and we were just in time for the sermon, a la Laudre.

The Army Chaplain took the service and as a lesson read from Genesis of the creation and preached on it later giving the scientific explanation of the creation of the world on the theory of a new collision and a bit pulled off the sun to make old mother earth. He explained that the story in Genesis was the ancients way of putting the Creation, and chronologically it was good. The parade service was over by 11.30 but there was a communion after to which we both stayed. An officer and 5 or 6 soldiers stayed as well.

Mon. 28. 2. 44

'M' has packed up the Merchant navy stuff and it fills the paper sack that the wool came in and my first job after breakfast was to get the bundle to the P.O. in time for the morning collection, not a very heavy job, it weighed 12 lb, but an awkward thing to carry so I put it on my shoulder.

Not too bad out in the garden and I spent quite a good time out there, but it wanted jobs of movement in order to keep warm and after a bit my back protested against the treatment. I shall be glad when it gets a bit warmer so as to be able to do some of the jobs requiring exertion.

Tues 29. 2. 44

Although your letter was dated Feb 26 it did not get here until this morning, they are very leisurely these days

'M' went to post to you in the afternoon and at a quarter to four found the postman just off with the collection but 'M' had him wait until the parcel was weighed and stamped. There was some argument with both postman and Mrs Thrower and I have written to the Postmaster about it.

The farm people have made big fires at Braeside to air the place for the home comers and M has been in during the day and I have been over to black out in case the fires suddenly blazed up. 'M' has written pretty exhaustively so I shant have much to say.

Crossways

Ludham

29. 2. 44

My dear Babs

Here is the jumper and I hope you will like the finished effect. I think it is very nice. When Mrs Vidler came in the other day it was lying on my table and she admired it and wondered how you were able to get the wool. She has been trying for some time to buy 8 oz for a cardigan and she said did I think you could get it for her. I said you would try. Well she called this morning and left her coupon book, so I am sending it on. The colour she would like is a light navy. Let me know when you write what the prospects are and get it if you can. She will pay me when it comes now. We were very sorry indeed to learn about Steer(?), but not a bit surprised after what you said about her condition when you were here. I went round to Browns this morning to ask them for Friday afternoon but found Mrs B tied up indoors again with a bad cold and she could not say anything certain. If she is able she will come but anyhow I saw Mary C, and as she is going back to her mothers on Saturday I can expect her .....new husband, who is going off on a prolonged stint for a week or so at the weekend, would want her for anything special on Friday. She will come along and let me know if she is unable to come.

The new man H. Ainsworth decided on Thursday to accept the living. They have no family and as they told Mrs B. are very simple people with no incumbrances and will find the stipend sufficient!! She is 60 from what I saw of them she would be about the same and they want to stay put when they get here, he said there would be no question of wanting to go on to something better. I wonder how it will all turn out.

Madge and Sally are coming back tomorrow Wednesday. Just 11 weeks since they went, Mrs M came over yesterday (brought me 6 eggs and milk.) She was going to light a fire and wanted me to keep an eye on it during the day. Today they are S. Cleaning and the Sweep so Cissy has lit up the fire and we are looking to it. The bed has been brought down to air. I'm afraid they will be pretty miserable when they get here as Mrs Alibone had a note yesterday

saying they were coming and that they were very sad about leaving Mrs Lawson and never expected to see her again alive. I hope they won't think they have been brought home for nothing. I wanted Mrs Swanston and Vera to come home on Wednesday but they are having Mrs Adcock to tea. Poor woman it is pitiful to see her. I was amazed at the difference I noticed when I saw her at the W.I. last week. Mrs Swanston says she is practically helpless now. Cannot use her hands at all and has to have her teacup held for her to drink. Mrs Lamb told me at the W.I. that the case is hopeless and that Mrs A knows it. Isn't it dreadful, all that money and nothing can be done for her.

The Polish film went off very well and the lady turned up in time. The pictures were very good, all of Poland before the war, beautiful buildings in Warsaw and Cracow and some lovely snow scenes and pictures of the people in their native dress.

I have had a B. Trans: Certificate this morning, a handy little thing for the pocket showing each time I have been, about the size and shape of a Driving licence with a slip stuck in for each date. I showed it to Mrs Smallwood and she is going with me next time I go.

There is no more maroon wool in hand yet but I have written and told Miss D that I have two red sweaters in the making, she says the rail transport is so bad at present, but with the 3 lb of navy D K she sent me last week I am keeping most people going. Mrs B has 8 oz of the red to get on with the 2nd sweater.

A lovely day today but cold.

Much love and a kiss  
Ma.....