

February 1943

Crossways  
Ludham  
Gt Yarmouth  
2.2.43

My Dear Babs

I am sending you these few 'heralds of Spring'. I know you will like to have them. The Snowdrops are mostly from 'Braeside, we have a few, so far, I have not found check enough to go round the vicarage garden. I am not sure the Aubretia will last long as some I gathered at the weekend looks sick already. Pa has told you we went to 'Church View' on Monday and had a very nice evening. They are coming here one evening next week. Miss Samuels stay in London did not last long. I believe she is back today; I'm not surprised. I sent Miss D a good parcel just lately and had the enclosed letter in acknowledgement. I got Nellie Skillern to type me a copy and have put it up in the box today. I mentioned it to one or two at the weekend and easily got 3 new Knitters fixed up, so have sent to her for still more wool. I have 3 doing sweaters now. Mrs. ( ) and Mrs Andrews Fenside in addition to Mrs B. I seem to have taken possession of the Box. I wonder how long it will be before someone wakes up and wants it for something.

Mrs Farrow has bought the bungalow next to the one the Robinsons had just beyond the village hall and they are moving next week. Had a letter from Madge today, she says her sister has been able to sit on the side of the bed so hopes she may steadily improve. She has been in a bed for 13 weeks.

Our S the S week is to be June 24<sup>th</sup> to July 1<sup>st</sup> I am informed by Miss Weekley this morning decided at a meeting at Horning in Jan: I must write and ask her what about it for I had no notice of meeting. Still it's not a bad time to have it after all. The group did £216 for January. We are fairly quiet here. I wish I felt a bit more energetic for the weather is good enough at times for gardening and there is plenty waiting to be done. I had a treat on Sunday. Saw a Goldfinch outside the kitchen window, a beautiful little thing with bright yellow and white markings on its wings and a bright red cap. It stayed a little while but not enough for Pa to get to see it. It was exactly like the illustration in the book.

Vera asked when ½ term was and going by the fact that you usually return to school on Ash Wednesday I told her I thought you would be home on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Is that right?

So far no one has been found to act as Canteen Sec and the waste paper has not been dealt with since Xmas. Mrs Skillern tells me she is carrying on in Nells place at the point: nothing about a man to take Ted's Place. The Pakefield man found he would drop about £100 a year and also, he badly wanted to come here could not do that – this living is £280 so Mrs B tells me but Ted got a grant from somewhere of £60 which made it a bit better. Noone seems to know where from and it appears Riches did not know he had it. Its funny you should say Rene never mentioned this when she wrote to you. Mrs Brown says she has never mentioned him when she has written to her and there was no word of him in Rene's letter to me you know. I think this is all now.

Much love and a kiss  
Mama

Crossways Ludham  
Norfolk  
Feb 3 1943

Dear Billee

The trip back here this morning was quite uneventful- no thrills and he brought me right up to the gate before turning.

After I got in, the parcel was the first consideration and when it was all tightly tied up, I tried the weight and wondered what to do if it was over weight – looked up an old diary and saw 11lbs limit and it weighed nearly 14, so got Whitakers which said 15lbs limit so it was OK.

We both went up to the village took the parcel and 'M' the milk pots and got rid of my load at the P.O. whilst 'M' went after the milk.

I called in at Knights to see if I could get a sieve, as M's has gone wrong and she has mine, but nothing doing, sieves are unobtainable at present.

Just as I was coming away from Knights Col Taylor brought the new CO and Second in Command to enquire about the use of the village hall. I was shut in and no one made any attempt to let me come out and I didn't want to stand there like a tailor's dummy so I edged past with a 'sorry' and went over to Throwers for the paper only to find that it had gone.

The new C.O. is a tall big man but looked comparatively thin beside his second who doesn't look like a Blue ribbonite and pretty weighty. M and me came back together.

The juice played us up again being off for a couple of hours 10.45- 12.45 good for dinners but it did not trouble us much as it was all cold except soup which was on the Ideal boiler.

The fine morning did not last long several fleeting showers after dinner but I managed to cut up some fine wood and repair some of the wood damage to Rose posts but the growths are a mess and beastly awkward to manage, so as there was a bitter wind I gave up and came in for tea and blacked out after the news for the first time this year.

We've thought of you today, what a journey it must have seemed and I expect you had a similar afternoon which would not enliven the journey, shall be glad to hear how you got on, the last part of the journey by bus and the dark was I expect the most trying.

Another crowd of machines has been droning overhead this evening and another big raid has evidently taken place somewhere on the continent and they did not go all at once.

Thursday 4.2.43

It's a lovely morning but such a cold wind. The first thing I heard was a lot of shovelling out in the front and when I went to look, I found the kitchen gate entrance half blocked with ballast and electric conduits and later on a gang of men were breaking up the road with a barrier of umpteen red flags round them. They are air ministry men and it looks as though its in connection with the landing lights but the work is only just started and I can't diagnose the operations yet.

M had a cup of tea in bed this morning and a short lay in. I did not get up till nearly 5.30 and by that time I was able to dispense with artificial light, the mornings are nicely drawing out now.

Nothing much more to tell you this morning am going to post this when I go up for the paper to and take oil drum to Throwers, shall probably get my seeds from the P.O.

Well cheerio, how do you find stairs since you got back

With best love

Pa

Juice went off again this morning at 9.15 and not on yet 12oclock

Dear Babs

No date or address

Just a few lines. The jumper is on the last stages, in fact I am now making the second sleeve. As I was doubtful how the silk was going, I have put it all together and I am sorry to say it is a bit on the big side, especially the armholes. I have put the correct number of stitches on and the only part I have any doubt about is whether I have made the front from the armhole to shoulder a pattern too long. The sleeves have to be short as I cannot get any more of the silk. I have used 10oz anyway it sits fairly well and the collar is very nice. Just counted 24 going home, if anyone has any objection to the sound of aircraft, they had better not come here for yesterday they even got on my nerves. The din was incessant from about 8o/c in the morning.

Rene has been in once or twice this week. Thanked me for looking after Ted and one day brought us some raspberries hence Pa's lay in and out of sorts feeling, fresh fruit uncooked usually serves him in the same way. She brought me some milk one day and yesterday came to beg a lettuce and some yellow flowers. She said you was sorry she could not see you but she had to spend best part of 2 days with a sick friend who was as far as I could make out living alone. She got her into Keighley Hop; before she came home. I sent her a bunch of our Lavender. She hopes to save a few rasp; for you but the dry weather is finishing them off very early. Our garden is absolutely parched up. Hope the cherries etc came in good condition. I picked them the last this morning but have about 10 bottles you will be able to have some Cherry tart while you are all here. The costume is finished and looks and feels very nice but of course I have the feeling that the sleeves are very noticeable, Rene says unless she had been told she would not have noticed the diff; I wonder. Friday and Sat we were inundated by American soldiers doing work on the telegraph poles all along the road. They were a noisy lot and very different to the Canadians, very superior, we English are poor fry but then I expect by now they think they are winning the war. I must say they seem to have some fine clothing there working, suits were very swell and shirts better looking than our officers.

Madge had an aircraft letter from Capt. (Gosing/Gowing?), he is in Sicily and having a fine time he says. He was also in Tunis and enjoyed the Victory Parade very much. Hope they come through alright. Pa is waiting to post so will pack up.

Much love and a kiss

Mama

Xways Ludham Norfolk

Fri 5.2.43

Dear Billee

I finished repairing the damage to the rose posts this afternoon. I think tying climbing roses is one of the worst jobs in the garden everything gets very mixed up by the time the wind has had its way. However, it's all done with now for a time.

We had madge and Sally over this morning for bridge and as usual Sally was on the winning side each of 3 rubbers and Madge on the losing side. Madge and Sally did not play together at all.

Madge certainly does not put the zeal into the game as she did when we first played with them and one never knows what her lead means.

They departed shortly before eleven and we did not have any 9oclock news. We waited up for the midnight bulletin and heard what grand progress the Russians are making.

This morning was fine and almost cloudless but rain put in an appearance in the afternoon and I amused myself making out a new thermometer for the War Savings group. Made it look rather more important and provided for £1500 instead of £1000 as last year.

Sat 6.2.43

I went out on the milk and paper jaunt this morning and as there had been some rain during the morning it was a convenient opportunity to finish off the thermometer ready for M when she went this afternoon.

Although it was bright this afternoon the wind was cold and I found some indoor jobs, sorted out my seeds which have all been delivered now, and went over the seed potatoes and reduced the eyes. Did nothing much this evening but amuse myself by the fire and read.

Sun 7.2.43

'M' has told you all the details and left nothing much for me to say today. You know we both went to a very full church and I posted your letter when we came out.

Am deep in *The Worsted Viper* that 'M' told you about. There is a strong local flavour about it and a map of the Broads district makes it easy to follow. (*The Worsted Viper by Gladys Mitchell is a 1943 detective novel*)

Unfortunately, Charlie lost the 1" map when he was here and I have to fall back on the map in the guide book but it is very interesting on account of the Topography. Also, there is a plentiful supply of facilities sandwiched in.

Mon 8.2.43

I was the first up this morning. 'M' is still troubled with the pains in her leg and which looked uncommonly like sciatica. Resting seems to ease it and I hope it will soon settle down, like sciatica does at times.

But with warmer and dryer weather I hope it will be better although it hasn't been much warmer (5 deg. of frost last night and a max of 38 today) it has been considerably dryer today but a red sunrise, a backing wind and a falling barometer indicate a change to moister conditions especially after a rime almost like snow this morning.

I went to the village this morning to save M a trip was coming back and remembered that I was running a wireless now and had not taken out a fresh license so forthwith interviewed the post mistress and rectified the omission.

By the time I got back it was half past twelve so did not start a job outdoors but sat down by the fire and gloated on the news of Russia's progress towards emancipation. They seem to have the Germans in a tight corner round about Rostock. I don't think much of the Kirch Straits as a German getaway.

Things seem comparatively quiet in Tunisia but there seems to be plenty of patrol activity which may be a prelude to more important actions.

Your (Punch) came the other day but have not sent it on as you have said that you see it at school.

This afternoon has been dismal and cold and I was glad to find odd jobs.

This last day or so we have had tea in daylight and blacked out partly before the 6pm news and finished off afterwards.

This evening, I nearly came a cropper over a chair on the right-hand side of the front door and upset a vase containing some water. Didn't do much damage and didn't break the vase although the water ran nearly up to our bedroom door and soaked the passage carpet in places.

The Acle syren went a little while ago 7.50pm but I don't fancy there will be much doing with a thick canopy of cloud such as there is tonight. 8.30 Syren just given the 'raiders past' signal so we can rest again.

And now I think I read a bit more of Worsted Viper but will not close this up until tomorrow morning.

Tues 9.2.43

Got your letter this morning, glad to hear (touch wood) that you have no so far had a relapse with your knee. Poor Freeman, Miss Evans has evidently got her sized up. 'M' has finished the pullover I am instructed to tell you.

The sciatica is not much better today and she did not get up very early and I finished up the Worstead yarn at breakfast time; what a mix up.

The antifreeze mixture was quite a good thought. Today it is blowing hard and the raindrops sound almost like hail on the lounge windows so am not in a hurry to get the paper and post this still

Cheerio and best love

Pa

Xways Ludham Norfolk

Mon 7.2.43

Dear Bilee

I usually work in somewhere my daily doings, a remark about the weather, but hope I do not bore you with it. This topic seems almost to come to the top here in the country where so much depends and doubly so on Mondays, for which day I usually got a request for a forecast. Fortunately, today was a fare drying day and I did the village trip in the morning it was cold and draughty with a wind from N& NW but it did not prevent a short spell in the garden this afternoon tidying up and weeding, for with such a comparatively mild spell everything is growing and grass coming into flower and in some cases shedding seed. So, there will be a peck of trouble if the grass in the wrong place is not kept in check. I have completed the edging to the bed under your bedroom window and it certainly has improved the look of things

Tues 8.2.43

More weeding and tidying up and 'M' had a turn at the drive which had a few spots of green, also dead leaves and some straw from England's nuisance across the lane. I did not stay out late in the afternoon as there was a new washer indicated on the cold tap over the sink in the kitchen. It was a trouble to take down but once that was done it was it was all plain sailing but I used up the last of my reserve and don't know quite when or where I shall be able to get another.

The wireless occupied a big slice of the evening included was Brains Trust and I think that the question master was weak and speakers got right off mark and scarcely one straight answer was given. It is not easy to be a good chairman though. Your letter came this morning.

Under the spreading Chestnut Tree sounds amusing though it was quite appropriate for the Duke of Yorks camp and the boy scouts to for that matter.

Miss E seems to be undertaking the Health Visitors job its not much of a job to inspect children's heads suspected of being 'crummy' perhaps parents or some at least may jib at her activities.

You don't say what the result of the inspection was

Glad to hear that you got the parcel on Saturday and that the contents were in good condition we wondered whether you would get it on Saturday.

We have a fine lot of bloom in the garden. The crocus made a bright bit with their bunches of yellow opening out when we got a spot of sunshine, some Geum, Red Hot Poker, a few bits of (B ) Stock, but the gayest of all is the Aubretia which is coming out in masses.

I'm not surprised about Tulips its full early for them and nurserymen are forbidden to use fuel for growing flowers.

The question about the knitting I anticipated in my last letter and you have done similarly with my remarks about half term. Swe did not quite realise that you had so long a holiday and if you break the trip at Peterborough, it will make it seem a bit longer.

It looks as though no one will hear much about Ted unless he has a letter for himself.

Wed 9.2.43

I don't know much about this morning as I didn't turn out until 12.30, nothing wrong, just had an extra sound sleep. I don't think I missed much as it was cold and windy and it was a big effort to get out into the garden to wage war on weeds, but managed a couple of hours and had tea soon after five and blacked out after.

Theres not much on the wireless this evening to interest us and 'M' has found a job in converting a brown coat into a frock. Well, its 8 o'clock and fresh books have turned up today so I'll close up for the present and cheerio and best love

Pa

Crossways  
Ludham  
Sunday  
7.2.43

My Dear Babs

We were glad to get the letter from you on Saturday morning together with the P.C. Its very amusing about Freeman but then you knew she would have to make a martyr of herself over the work. I was glad to see Miss E was so nice over it all and not a bit surprised to learn that you saw Dr Hill before going to Barlow ( ).

Its funny about the Air Force they seem to give plenty away on railway journeys. As far as we know there are not any further additions to Ludham altho' all kinds of rumours about the numbers expected. The titled gent is Lord Rowallen B 1895 son and heir B 1919 created 1911. We wonder who he is, his name is Corbett. We also hear there is a millionaire Major Wills by name good stuff tobacco and cigarettes!! So, I expect we shall see plenty of hobnobbing in Ludham. Miss Hacon told me yesterday that accommodation was wanted in the village for 24 wives, what hopes! But it seems so far none of the men are being billeted. I don't know whether we shall eventually find ourselves glad to have a wife here but my leg will have to be better at least before we can think of that. It has been worse than ever yesterday and today but may be gone again by tomorrow, at least I hope so.

Rene came in on Friday afternoon for 25/- worth of stamps and brought the vest. According to her Ted wants about 18ins more in the width of body. Anyhow she is going to reknit a piece and find out the tension and then take measurements. I guessed where this ( ) came from altho' she did not say. Mrs Anderson came back on Thursday and the school children had their treat yesterday and by what Rene said there were to be about 22! I didn't have much of a day yesterday with W.S. only 12.15.0 but there are bound to be small weeks some part of the time.

Mr. Weddall has resigned the Office of Sec; for the area (got out of it before N. Week I expect) and I have had a notice that the new Sec is a Mrs. Weekley School House, Horning so another S.M. has been roped in. We had a much more cheerful letter from C&G on Saturday morning. We hope to start work this week. We will enclose the letter. I'm sure Charlie would have liked Leslie to have stayed a day or two longer but I expect he wanted a flutter round in town. Madge and Sally came over on Friday evening, Work has started on the landing lights as perhaps Pa has already told you. We were glad to hear that at 1pm today Winston is safely back in England. We went to church at 11 this morning. A lovely sunny morning and the church was packed, quite a lot of Air Force in addition to soldiers but we saw no sign of the choir we were told about and Ted even had the lessons to read himself. There were a good number of Ludham people there and the Boardman's in force. We met Ted outside about 4 mins to 11 and he greeted us "no blinking organist" but anyhow Miss G turned up in time. I expect she never knows when she will be wanted or not and doesn't trouble too much after all one can hardly blame her. Sally has written to Norwich to make an appointment about her glasses and wants me to go with her, so if everything, that – my leg and the weather are alright I may go one day next week. I was hoping to start washing operation tomorrow but as things are today I am afraid I was not surprised to know you did not like hills or stairs but I hope after a few days that will wear off but you must bear in mind Dr Hills advice and go slow for a bit. I conclude that ½ term is Feb 20<sup>th</sup> or you would have mentioned it in your letter. Hope the parcel arrived quickly and in good condition. I find I did not put in the pyjama belt but will send it in a letter. You must try and get "The Worst Viper" a thriller by Gladys Mitchell. We got it this week and it deals with all round this part from Norwich to Thurne, all round the broads. I have enjoyed it and Pa is now in the middle of it. Its very new as you know. Miss Broom has brought in 2 prs sox and taken more wool so I will hang on with the pile and see if Gertie sends hers along. Nothing from Dick yet

Much love and a kiss

Mama

Xways Ludham Norfolk

Thurs 11.2.43

Dear Billee

It seems quite a long time to look back to today and ever so much longer to the time I said goodbye to you at Potter.

It has been quite a mild day for February but a little rain made it unpleasant at times but this did not interfere with my little job of installing my propagator in the lounge at the French doors and I got seven sorts of seeds going for now.

The juice has been off all day from shortly after nine a.m. to soon after 5.0pm I was glad to be able to listen to the 6pm news and hear what Churchill has to say. Jolly good yarn and quite inspiring, not like his earlier broadcasts when he promised us blood and sweat and tears.

His was a pretty exclusive tour and no interruptions from the enemy as we did at Berlin the other morning.

We had a soldier visitor this evening for a bath, he had been scrounging round and Mrs Allard advised him to try here. He took about an hour over it and had coffee, cake, and biscuits whilst listening to the 9pm news and a resume of Churchills speech in the Commons. Foster is his name, a private. He went off just before 10 o'clock.

Fri 12.2.43      Juice off

again from 9 till 1.15 so we had no 10 o'clock news, but the Times gave a good impression of Russian

advance, they must have almost unlimited men and equipment to sweep the Germans back as they are doing.

Have tackled the kitchen garden path this morning and cleared the grass away from the foot of the bank, gives a bit more room to work along, but expect it will be overrun again by June. The ground is drying up somewhat and the strong drying winds should produce conditions suitable for seed sowing if we don't have heavy rains.

Have been reading a thriller "No light came on". Makes you wonder where you are at times but not exactly the kind of book I dote on.

A trip to the village to the P.O. to get milk and paper was about my biggest excitement? For today.

Sat 13.2.43

Shortly after breakfast this morning Newton brought along 5cwt each of coal and coke so with what I had in hand there should be nothing to worry about this winter. There is another 5cwt of coal to come in March.

It was a brilliant cloudless morning but a very strong and cold wind from the N.W. Not very satisfactory from a seed sowing point of view but I managed to sow some Peas and Onion which were not so susceptible to the wind and planted my Shallots, but Parsnips etc had to wait although the soil was just right.

In the end I was glad to pack up and come in out of the wind and hoped that heavy rain would not spoil my seed bed.

Sun 14.2.43

Another day of strong cold wind and although it threatened at times no rain fell.

We both went to church at 11am, it was full and very few seats vacant. Ted gave a better yarn than usual. Even Madge thought he was very good this morning. You've had by this time a letter from 'M' and I don't think I can add much today.

Mon 15.2.43

More strong cold winds again today and I tried to burn up rubbish outside the garage but it was a failure- too damp yet – but I was glad that the soil was still fit for seed sowing and I was able to get on with that.

'M' went to the vicarage this morning to collect the Aconites and Snowdrops, did they reach you in good condition. It was against regulations to send them so they should be all the more valuable for that.

Do you remember the (Lhandra Snowdrake ) shouldn't mind being there again now. We had a lovely time there, something to be remembered.

'M' whose leg seems to be O.K. again now had a spell in the garden clearing up near the kitchen gate under the lee of the trees and out of the wind. It was quite pleasant there but I was glad to put on my oilskin coat which keeps the wind off very well but in the cold weather it is very stiff and awkward at times.

Celia's House- quite a good and quiet sort of a yarn filled in the evening for me.

Tue 16.2.43

When it was time to get up 'M' said it was raining so I turned over and stayed there till 12.0 The rain wasn't much and there were long bright intervals between the squalls from the N.W. Rain and hail that fairly stung your face. However, she managed quite a spot of washing, including some sheets but the wind was so rough that things came adrift but soon dried so they seemed non the worse for contact with the ground.



I put in the afternoon digging and was able to just keep myself warm and was glad to come in soon after five. Well, that's about all for the present. Cheerio and best love, Pa.

For Economy Labels- 250 3/- 500 5/- Hodgson, Dept 73 Printer Bradford      Crossways  
Ludham  
14.2.43

My Dear Babs.

Your letter with (relief) came yesterday morning and we were glad to know you were gradually getting used to stairs etc but- be careful of overdoing it. The weather here is not too bad for Pa has been able to do a fair bit in the garden. I suppose we have got some real winter yet to come but it will be a pity – for everything is moving along. The Primroses etc under your window are quite gay and we have a fair number of yellow crocus out. I picked a nice bunch of golden catkins this afternoon from the nut bush by the big holly. The Tits have found the fat and one comes every aft: just after five for supper and while we were having tea today an Owl flew across the lawn and settled on the rose supports opposite the window and now, we are able to have our tea before Pa blacks out it really feels as if the brighter the days are coming. I am glad to say my leg has been netter since Thursday and I feel quite alright again myself. I hope it will not return. I called in at the vicarage to return the books. They were in an uproar. Rene afraid I should go into the study which she had not tidied and Ted determined that I should , no fire, but he had his typewriter in the kitchen dining room and huddled up over the oil stove, so needless to say I did not stay long but I did ask what about the Aconites and I am going up one day early in the week to pick some for you so that you get a sniff of Ludham for ½ term. Have heard from the Horning S.M about Victory Week and she tells me she has written to Mr Wright who has advised her to get in touch with me. The week is fixed for May 11<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>. I believe that is right but will not trouble to refer to the letter There does not seem much prospect of officers being billeted out so far and not having been out much during the week I do not know if all the ladies are fixed up. The latest effort of the W.V.S is to demonstrate darning and the sewing on of buttons!! to the soldiers.

Yesterday morning a party consisting of Mrs Adcock, Matt and Jeff (rather) Mrs England, Mrs Smallwood and one or two others were escorted round the camp to various huts where the men were ready with "holey sox" etc and the time fixed for this little do was 12 pm Sat .I heard all about it from one or two on Sat afternoon as you may guess and as one person said "Oh yes some of them will do anything to run after the Off. With a L.....d & M.....e among them. We went to church this morning at 11. The church was full and it was quite a nice service Ted managed., quite a good address in fact Madge thought it was very good!! And also thinks he is improving. There have been quite a lot more men into the village since you left and they say the place is pretty full up now. I met Miss England on Sat morning in the village and she enquired after you and how you were finding things now you were back and going all day. I thought it was very nice of her. Rene told me you had written to them. I had a letter from Dick the other day. I think I have put him off the physic business as far as I am concerned for, he says he gathers I am not much interested and may think what he has written a bit fantastic but I shall find out later that it is not fantastic but very simple. He does not say anything more about the knitting but I shall remind him about that when I write again. He says Arthur is only able to get about between the two upstairs rooms now and its quite an effort for him to dress and undress himself. Oh, I see he adds that he does go down stairs occasionally Well IO suppose you will be spending your ½ term in school, still never mind Easter will soon come round

and by that time everything should be spring like here that is if we are still lucky enough to escape war efforts. Much love and a kiss    Mama

Xways Ludham Norfolk

Wed 17.2.43

Dear Billee

A fine bright morning but no so bright in the afternoon with little wind and a dry air, so washing and gardening were the chief pursuits today

Ted came in during the morning ostensibly to bring in a 'Punch' "M" was in the middle of the wash (not the East Coast one) and did not appreciate the break off. He seemed to be just killing time.

I got on with my digging but "M" was a bit tired in the afternoon and went to bed. Wanted to be called at 3.45 but when I found her fast asleep, I didn't carry out instructions, thought it just as well for her to lie asleep for a while

Thurs 18.2.43

Another genial day and quite Spring like in the sun and out of the wind and I was able to get outdoors (and incidentally get a backache) but apart from the latter it was quite a treat to be outdoors. "M" thought so too and put in a good time clearing moss and win ds from the drive just inside Crossway's gate.

Two books came from Smiths this morning and "M" left me a thriller to get on with "Fear Comes to Chalfont" quite a good cornie yarn too and introducing Inspector French of whom I have read about before. I can recommend if you want a "cornie" (?) book.

Fri 19.2.43

A lovely Springlike day and almost cloudless with a max of 53 "M" and I had a trip to the village this morning to get paper, milk etc and to take a couple of Cyclamen for the church flowers.

Rene was doing the flowers and was absolutely stumped so we thought that the two pots of Cyclamen would do very well if the pots were concealed and I took them up this morning, preferring to do that rather than entrust them to anyone else.

I expect Miss S will be interested to know that the cyclamen that she had a year or two ago is now decorating the Communion table at St Catherines. She will know from this that it was not spoiled.

"M" has been out in the garden again carrying on with the job. Its surprising what a number of weeds there are in the drive when you look for them and needless to say I have taken full advantage of the fine weather.

"M" went over to Braeside this evening for a while and found they had been to Yarmouth today, of course they found some eats or Madge would have been very disappointed. I should have thought that Madge would have kept away from Yarmouth considering all things.

Sat 20.2.43

Another lovely day again and "M" went on the usual trip to the village.

She met Ted who took her to see the notice he had put up about the church service restoring the 6.30 Evensong and putting back H.C. to 8am and most noteworthy of all instituting evening communion. I expect this will find a few dissenticals (?) but he says that so many are working on Sunday that evening is about the only time they are free. Well, we shall see what the reactions are. I for one hope to attend the first evening celebration.

If we get many more days like today it will help the winter out but March can be very nasty at times just to let us know that winter is still here

Seed are germinating in my propagator and I want to entrust them to the frame shortly, so naturally hope that we shall not get a bad set back.

Sunday 21.2.43

We had a reminder this morning that its still winter 3 deg. of frost and a thick rime everywhere which did not soon disappear and was dropping off the trees as we went to church this morning making the road quite wet in places.

There was a full church mainly soldiers of course and a good sprinkling of officers so they are not allowed to dodge church parade.

We sat just behind officers who all joined in the service, one a major, sung out lustily and generally the singing was much heartier than when the Shropshire's were here, but you could hear some were shouting rather than singing.

The mist or perhaps fog I should call it has not shifted all day so inconsequence it has been dull and gloomy in contrast to some of the past few days. Might almost have been a November day with planes conspicuous by their absence.

How well the Russians are doing lately. I hope they will have something to celebrate the day when we listen to the 9pm news. We generally get the latest from Russia during that bulletin.

"M" has had another huge parcel of wool from Miss Dutton. She wants fingerless gloves, fingers an inch long (a bit Irish isn't it) and is just struggling with one now. It does look like a huge thing but probably it is to be worn over something else. "M" says that she must find others to take some of this tedious work off her hands.

Mon 22.2.43

The package came this morning and the Easter arrangements will even things out a bit for you. Am ging to post this morning so can't reply in detail. The K.I account is interesting.

Best love Pa

Crossways Ludham Norfolk

Feb 23 1943

Dear Billee

Almost a typical November day and February this year seems to give us some Topsy Turvy conditions and a mixture of March and November. It was not pleasant enough to stand about in the garden so I took a little exercise and walked over to Ludham Hall to try and fix up a Bridge party for 'M' and was successful in arranging next Tuesday.

After I came back, I went to the village on the usual morning start and called in at Mutt and Jeff's and fixed them up for Thursday as well.

We have had a job today indoors and have shifted the book shelves from the corridor back into the dining room. The books were beginning to get mouldy so a room with a fire was indicated. This took us until about half past four to complete, so didn't leave much time before tea.

M had left everything after dinner in order to finish the book shelves and was in the middle of it when Madge came over for a 'little chat' other roads small talk about nothing important and M was hung up. Consequently, we just got tea in time for 6pm news as had to go to the PO to sort out a muddle over her savings with Mrs Thrower.

This evening, I finished my book 'Envy My Simplicity', a tale about a lad who was not quite all there, but who was a delightful character and admirably portrayed.

Feb 24 43 Wednesday

A better day and much warmer with a considerable amount of sunshine in the morning. Just the day I had been waiting for to do some pottering jobs which did not entail much movement and I got in a fine batch of Chrysants cuttings about 2 months earlier than last year which shows the difference in the two seasons as cuttings were not procurable until the middle of April last year.

We went over to Mattocks this evening and played 3 rubbers changing partners each rubber. I had astonishing cards and was on the winning side each time being 2450 up at the end. 'M' had bad luck until the last rubber when we played together and won the rubber.

Got home just before 11 Scottow was brightly lighted up as we came indoors, so you could reckon that there was nothing doing with Jerry.

As sometimes customary after these evenings we stayed to listen to the midnight news but there was nothing starkling in the headlines so we packed off to bed.

Feb 25 1943 Thursday

Managed to be up in time for 8o'clock news but nothing special this morning so got on with breakfast and the most interesting item in the 1pm news was the announcement of the prolonged double summertime from the first Sunday in April to the second Sunday in August. I wonder whether we shall get back to Greenwich time after the war and cut out summer time during the winter.

Quite a nice bright morning but as has happened lately an increase of cloud in the afternoon scarcely saw the sun during the later part of the day.

It was quite warm and a treat to be outdoors again today and have worked off quite a lot of odd jobs in preparation of the spring and summer. I wish I could be sure of the continued absence of sharp frost during March then I could go right ahead and cheat the usual dry weather in May and June.

'M' had her bridge party this afternoon with Mutt and Jeff and Mrs Vidler (from Ludham Hall) and contrary to last night had a lucky spell winning each of 3 rubbers, with a change round of partners and being £100 up at the end. They arrived about 3 but I was in the garden except for tea and to b lackout.

Enclosed is Dicks last letter; what says you.

Please send it back as 'M' wants to send it to Annie to see.

Fri morning 26.2.43

Nothing more to add before 'M' takes this to post except that it is a fine morning and cloudless sky, but a cold wind and a hoar frost this morning like snow but 33 in the air was the lowest, so my seeds should be OK so far. By the way nothing from you today.

Best love and cheerio Pa

Xways Ludham Norfolk Fr 26.2.43

Dear Billee

This seems an enormous sheet of paper and I begin to wonder whether I can find enough matter of interest to you to fill it up.

The weather is kind again today and plenty of sunshine, in fact every day lately has been sunny but with treacherous wind. Have been able to get out in the garden most of the day but my siestas are a little longer than they used to be and glad to be able to get one mow.

M is busy with fingerless gloves and is affecting some repairs to my khaki shirt which means half remaking one and the sacrifice of another in order to do it.

This evening there was considerable air activity almost a ceaseless drone of heavy machines going East with a few bumps thrown in, one was heavy and shook the windows. This was just at the end of the 9pm news. The times next day announced that an East coast town was raided, no

casualties and slight damage. There is plenty of room in the fields about here to drop bombs on but one was too near to be pleasant.

Sat 27.2.43

The clerk of the weather wasn't in a good mood today. I went to the village for the usual this morning and looked in at my cyclamen in the church to see if they wanted any water. They looked the same as when I took them there over a week ago. The church is cold and not too light so they do not develop very quickly, it looks as though they will put the rest of the month in there. This isn't but a few days now but I expect they will be in request for part of March at least as flowers are almost unprocurable now. It's a good thing I had them otherwise they might have been without all this time.

The village bobby stopped me as I was coming to the gate this morning and asked me if I had heard any strange noises during the night as England had lost four Ferrets. Well, I didn't hear any birds protesting although I woke about 2.30am without any reason. It may have been the birds keeking up a row.

My job today has been clearing up. There seems no end of this to do in the garden but am all free now to start digging the last section which is to have potatoes in it. The clearing up included transplanting a few things which would be if I go from here and by this measure, they should shift better but I have until next May twelve month to make up my mind what to do.

I have just finished a comic club. 'The house with the blue door' by Hulbert Footner. A queer yarn about a millionairess with the extraordinary ideas. 'M' is now deep in it and its worth reading.

Sun 28.2.43

Another bright day but ground was all white again this morning. We both went to church at 11am but as we had to sit almost at the back of the South Aisle, we heard very little of Ted's discourse. There were soldiers almost to the full extent of the church and some Airforce men who came in late had to sit in the choir stalls in the chancel.

We went out this afternoon for a walk. The weather was so inviting up past the camp – Long Lane – Sharpe St – How Hill. Took us just over an hour and a half. I should have enjoyed it better if I had not had an overcoat on. My old one was too much for a jaunt like that but we did not intend to go so far or I should not have had a top coat on. It was lovely though and the snowdrops at How Hill made a fine show and everywhere is so fresh and green and things are beginning to have little tips to the dormant buds, but the myrobalan in the garden has quite a lot of flowers open and yellow crocuses are a bright bit of colour in the sunshine. I do hope March does nothing rude when all is so promising, but you can't be sure, and winter doesn't end until 21 March after all.

These February days lately have reminded me of the day we first went to Welling to live and how grand we thought it was to be in the country for Welling was in the country then.

Well, I wondered how I was going to fill up, but find I shall want more room.

I had forgotten to tell you that I have at last got notice of my 1941-2 post war Credit, how speedy they are and 1942-3 is nearly due. 'M' says she is going to send something with this and I shall not post until I see what your next letter says that is if we get one Monday morning.

Miss Evans seems to be a decent sort after all and the extra half day will make all the difference to your long weekend but I suppose it will be pretty late when you get here. Shall you come to Norwich or Potter.

By the amount 'M' is writing I don't think there is much more that I can usefully add. So Cheerio and best love Pa

Crossways  
Ludham  
Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 43

My dear Babs

Your ink you will notice! Mine has given out so if you can think to bring me a bottle of Green Quink I shall be very glad. I had to use this on Saturday for War Savings and almost everyone informed me I had changed my colour. This month has been good again £95 making £275 so far this year. £100 comes from the local pub bit even so the balance is good for the group. I have not heard anything further about the Victory Week neither have I replied to Mrs. Weekly the new area sec since she informed me that Mr Wright had referred her to me when she wrote and asked him to 'get going' and believe there is a week for China coming along shortly for Ted gave out that there was to be a meeting with that object last Sunday in church. Since then, I have heard nothing more. You did not say anything about your knee in your last letter so I hope it is not troubling you over much now. It is very thoughtful of Mrs Soames to let you off early on the 19<sup>th</sup>. So, you intend to spend the ½ term railway fare, anyhow we shall be pleased to have you here. I hope the weather will be as nice as it is this weekend. Pa has told you about our walk this afternoon. It was lovely. The things are coming on fast in the garden so it will be a pity if we get bad weather in March to put them back, I have a fine bunch of Mirabella Plum blossom indoors, also some Polyanthas from under your bedroom window and there are lots of crocus in bloom. What a price for Daffs. Everyone will miss the flowers this spring. I wonder what you think of Dick's latest. I think it's a pity he did not take the N Ireland job altho' Arthur would miss his visits very much now. Dick seems to have inside information about France's activities. It was her birthday yesterday. This is Monday and another lovely day. I have not seen anything of Rene since she called in about the plants 10 days ago. Mrs. Edwards went a fortnight ago and probably by this time they have someone else there, I did not even notice her at church yesterday but she may have been. There was such a crowd that it was difficult to know who was there. I'm not too keen on the fingerless gloves but I have made two pair. I sounded out M.V.S but they did not seem to want to do any at present. They are busy with some Airforce wool which I suspect is for Mrs. Adcock. I hope Miss Broom will take some when she brings the sox back. Have you got the buttons for your costume yet and finished it off. I told Rene that we had made it and she was very sorry not to have seen it, but I said I expected it would come to Ludham at Eastertime. I have forced up my sleeve linings. I tried to get the Pyrex dish on Sat; but at present Throwers have nothing but enamel. 10ins is a big one, bigger than any I have. Everything is quiet here no undue disturbances since Thursday evening, by the way I have not heard anything about the 24 P.G.s that were wanting accommodation at Ludham and nobody seems to be in outside billets. Pa is posting today so this can go in with it.

Much love and a kiss  
Mama

P.S.

I cut this snap of the bishop out of the local paper. He was heading a procession at the opening of a Social Hut in Norwich. I thought you might like to have it. Its rather good of him, I think. M