

Crossways Ludham Norfolk  
Mar 2. 1945 Thursday

Dear Billee

Have just heard on the 6 o'clock news that double summer time will be introduced this year on Monday April 2 and will cease on July 15, and that Greenwich Mean time may be reverted to in October but it all depends on the course of the war, so we may get normal time this year if the war in Europe is over. P3 is very much against D.S.T. as just as it is getting near to light mornings, time is altered and they will still have to round up the cows in the dark.

There's some funny business over the coal rationing for despite the BBC announcement and "Times" Newton tells me that he is only allowed to deliver us 4 cwt instead of the 5 that we were told that we should get. This dodge was also played on us in February. It's a good job we are getting a supply of coke but that is restricted to 5 cwt in March.

On Tuesday we had an excursion to Yarmouth, it was a fine mild day otherwise Yarmouth might have seemed more depressing than it was, and it's bad enough. We started off with ideas of what we wanted to get but drew a blank nearly everywhere. All I got was some packing for the pumps, some tap washers and razor blades and M got ½ yard of material for a turban and when she got home liked it so much as to send for some for a dress.. We had a walk along the front and sat in the Bus at the Bus Station and arrived home pretty hungry. In the afternoon I made a start cropping the kitchen garden and got M a row of Shallots.

Not quite so nice a day as yesterday (Tues) but it keeps dry and the ground is in good condition for digging so have been doing some but the muscles of my back seem to have got a bit flabby during the winter, but I suppose that will right itself as I go on and the drying ground will make it easier. In the course of my operations I am using some of the compost heap but have not found the wasps' nest yet. I expect it is well in.

This Wednesday evening we had quite a diversion, just about dark there were quite a lot of bursts of machine gun fire and about a dozen hefty bangs, hand grenades I expect. Rather startling at first but we concluded that it was some kind of exercise by troops. Anyway we have not heard what it was all about.

Thursday 1. March

Another nice fine dry day but during the afternoon the wind shifted to a more northerly point and freshened and the temperature dropped making it unpleasant in the garden, nevertheless I persevered but was nothing loath to come in for tea.

We have been considering how your cold is getting on, hope that is not the reason we have not heard from you again.

Fri March 2 45 M is just off to the village and I will close down.

Cheerio and best love Pa

Crossways Ludham Norfolk  
Sun Mar 4 45

Dear Billee

I haven't any outstanding news to tell you and I daresay you've heard of Jerry's last effort over the Eastern Counties. Except for one very distant bang about 8 pm (before the moon came up) there have been quite a number of minor bangs with gun fire and smoke screens, evidently exercises by the local troops and I'm afraid that my digging operations suffered slightly on one occasion when operations included Lovers Lane and the rising ground on each side. On another occasion a similar event took place after dark. This (Sunday) evening there was a lot of firing at regular intervals, I should say over the sea on the South East.

Up till Thursday the wind was slight and the air quite spring like but the temperature dropped with some hail on Friday which soon disappeared after falling. I was however able to continue any digging with little interruption. The ground is just right and makes digging easier.

"M" hears that Miss Broom is not well but has not been able to hear much. She went up there after tea on Saturday but could not gain admission and today, before tea tried again with a like result.

After a fair morning it has turned out miserably wet and "M" had to brave the weather when she went to Miss Brooms and although she had intended to go to Church this evening she gave it up. Ironically enough it cleared up after tea when it was too late

P3 is having her share of music today, had your cello in the dining room this morning (she got in by 9.0 am) and did some piano practice after tea and before blackout and now this evening is getting a wireless programme from just after 7 o'clock.

"M" was speaking to Hall the other day about a bookcase and he knew someone who had one for disposal, what sort of condition or price he did not know but is going to make further enquiries. I was also sorry to hear the old Mrs Brook (the garage) has broken her arm, no small thing for one of her age. Another Ludham casualty is Mrs Swanston who has a broken wrist, left hand of course seeing that she is left-handed.

Reception in the Home Service is pretty bad these evenings, can scarcely get any of the wavelengths without continuous interference after dark. The German stations keep going – to our detriment – whatever is happening in Germany.

8 p.m. Have just heard evidence that Jerry is still kicking, a stick of bombs somewhere in the distance. A number of our fighters have been flying about, they are almost as good as a siren.

Your letter came on Friday morning, what a pity about your cough. and the concert. I bet you were wild. The Easter trip of yours looks like being an expensive one and I don't expect you relish an all night journey. Have not heard anything of the Mattocks this past week but when I saw them the morning after they came home Madge looked better than I have seen her do for some time past but I thought that Sally looked a bit finer drawn. I expect that she had plenty to do whilst away. She did not mention cows when Ivan Thomas called and she got her glasses over a week ago.

9 am Monday

Nothing from you this morning so will close down. "M" is going to see if she can contact Miss Broom and take order etc and will take this to post.

Cheerio and best love  
Pa

Crossways  
Ludham  
Gt Yarmouth  
6. 3. 45

My dear Babs

Your letter reached us this morning. Sorry to hear that your cold is not gone. It's your own fault I did not say stay for a day or two. I may say when Pa comes back and said there was a chance that you would not catch the train I was more than glad. I watched for the 6 Bus hoping you might be on it, but no luck. My own cold is still hanging about and it is not my usual throat cough but very chesty. Pa has told you about Miss Broom, well she seems to have the same thing and Dr B calls it Bronchial Influenza as Mrs Taumas was going in and out and Miss B was so bad that Mrs T sent for the Dr. who said she must stay in bed, so as Mrs T herself was very poorly she promptly took Miss B and put her to bed in her own house where I saw her on Monday comfortably installed with a fire in the room. How good it was for Mrs Taumas for Brown says she has some congestion, so I suppose he will keep her in bed for about a fortnight. I was very worried about her on Sat. and Sun. when I called there and could not get an answer, as I thought how dreadful if she is there on her own. It's a very pleasant bedroom and if propped up in bed she can see people passing in the road.

What a rotten trick for Lawrence to play. I should not think the rest of the staff have much of an opinion of her. About the Dress stuff, I daresay you have seen by the papers that there is going to be a great shortage of textiles before the end of this year and that next year the position will be worse, so I shall be glad to have the rust material 4 ½ yards. Pa will have told you about the piece I have ordered from Arnolds, which by the way, they have not sent yet, but 2 will not come amiss and the one you get will make a nice winter frock. If you are likely to want another during the next 12 months and can see anything you like I think you will be well advised to buy it. I am sending a patt. Herewith. 3/- per yard. I hope I get it, anyhow I shall wait until tomorrow and if it does not come then will write to them. He tried to get Arthur Mees Kent in Yarmouth but could not so Phyllis tried when she went to Norwich. At Looses they told her it was out of print so it's just as well that Pa was not keen on parting with his copy. I wonder if there might be an odd one about in Keighley or Bradford. You might see as when we wrote we told Uncle Arthur that we were sending one. Just fancy Alice taking the labels from all those plants after all the trouble we took in naming them all.. Luckily I kept the list you wrote out so will send it along. It's a good thing that they travelled so quickly and well as that gives them a good

chance. You will not get much time to yourself before Easter if you have 2 weekends away from Keighley. Why not put the Lilies weekend off till after the holiday if your cold is not better. I had hoped that Phyllis would have been away for Easter but she has decided to wait till after when the weather will be better and then she is going for a week to the Peak District. She has had the news today that Jack is now a Flying Off. which I suppose means a commission. She does not know whether it entails more "ops" as her mother did not say, but if it did I expect she would have mentioned it.

Well I think that is all now except that I got some fruit this week which included a ¼ lb of apricots !! So now I can make jam. Mrs Swanson's wrist is in plaster for 5 weeks. There is a lot of sickness about in Ludham. Pa and I are lucky to be as well as we are.

Much love and a kiss  
Mama

Crossways Ludham Norfolk  
Fri Mar 9 1945

Dear Billee

The weather has been very kind to us recently and with the ground in good condition I have been able to get on with digging the kitchen garden. In fact this afternoon I was able to work in a woolly coat for the first time this year. M had been doing a nice bit, has made it a practice to do a bit every day and this afternoon has been digging and planting Lupins and Gaillardias opposite your bedroom window which enabled me to clear them out of the kitchen garden where they would have interfered with the crops. I have been getting rid of some surplus Wallflowers and Canterbury Bells to Mrs Farrow and to Tammas of Lancaster. I shall finish out this week digging and then if the weather is still kind shall proceed to sow seeds. Quite an appreciable amount of compost heap has disappeared round about where the wasps flew in and out but although I have gone in about a yard I have not come across the nest: I suppose there is one there somewhere

On Thursday we went over to Mattocks for a game of Bridge but came out on the wrong side, on one occasion was 4 down doubled, 1400 points. Madge was my partner and the result was mainly due to a misunderstanding on calling.

P3 had been to the new music club and she had a front door key. I also took one. When we arrived I was unable to get my key into the lock as her key was inside. Didn't think to try the handle and had to wake her up about 11.15 in order to get in and then we learned that the door was not locked after all. Poor Phyllis. It was a magnificent evening, cloudless and with a most brilliant display of stars, which seemed to indicate rain not far away but Friday passed without a drop, and only a small fall in the barometer.

I took over to Mattocks some surplus plants and Sally came over this morning with some of their Brussels sprouts and some of their early pink saxifrage.

Since Mrs Newton gave up cutting my hair I have found someone else – Warren of the Bakers Arms. He has such a professional touch and used to have a salon at the back of the pub, until the military took possession of it some time ago. He now uses an attic, a somewhat primitive outfit but the result is quite good.

Our 2 cwt of coal is rapidly disappearing and I don't know what we should have done without coke and now have to be careful that a bit is available each day to start the fire in the morning and sparingly use a knob or two now and again to brighten things up.

P3 is promised a turn on the land next Monday and this will make a difference to her in the early morning, no more 5 am rising – that is of course if no one in the cow sheds decides to pack up and she has to remain in the sheds. She had her half day this afternoon and biked to Norwich but got home about 5.30 for tea.

The news from Germany is good, isn't it. We heard it first on the Midnight Thursday news. I shall be very interested to hear about the first Rhine crossing. In the Times today it says that it was due to a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and his platoon who seized an opportunity and got away with it more or less accidentally. Anyway its good news and it looks as though the Americans will be able to get on with it. I see also that there is a fresh American Army over there now, and things are looking more cheerful – from our point of view. So Cheerio and best love Pa

#### ON ACTIVE SERVICE

Corbett. – Previously reported missing, now reported killed in action in Italy, September,

1944, Lieut. J. P. Corbett, Reconnaissance Corp.  
only son of Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Corbett, formally  
of Welling and Erith.

(CUTTING) IN MEMORIAM

Crossways Ludham Norfolk  
13. 3. 45

Dear Billee

March still seems to be favouring us with good weather but I don't think that the absence of rain is altogether a blessing, the ground is rapidly drying out and it may be that when the sun gets more power that there will be little reserve moisture left and that a little more rain might have been desirable. Nevertheless I had a grand burn up of the winters accumulation of rubbish lying outside the garage doors and also dig quite a good spot of digging in between stirring up my fire. It had not quite all burnt out by the evening but I had to pull it all to pieces on account of the blackout – but I did get a good supply of potash.

Nothing special on Sunday. I went to Church with M at 6 o'clock but it does seem a farce to go there when you can't follow a lot of what Ainsworth says. How different things are there now. Evans used to give some rambling yarns – not much Theology but a deal of humour and you could understand him but it seems to be impossible to get accustomed to the present vicar's voice. We had the usual dawdle home with Madge and Sally and I blacked out in the fast gathering night and settled down by the fire for the rest of the evening.

On Monday I had promised myself an orgy of seed sowing starting with pots but had so much to do in clearing up in the garage and preparing soils etc – to say nothing of the time taken up by afternoon tea that it was time to come in before I had sown a single seed.

Today - Tuesday - continued fine and I did manage some sowing including Tomato which reposes down beside the fireplace and M's chair. There's not as much room there now with the wider bookcase so can't put my propagator box down there as I did last year and have had to put other seeds in the frame, they will like a bit longer and I am not sowing anything besides Tomato which requires a warm situation. This afternoon I turned my attention to sowing in the garden and soon began to fill up where I had been digging.

"M" has been patiently digging and cleaning opposite your bedroom window and has planted a fine lot of Lupins there which should make a good show if the ground does not get too dry for them to re-establish themselves there. She was up early this morning and has done a good bit of washing making quite an energetic day for her.

The parcel of Apricots turned up this morning and she also got the material from Yarmouth – after she had sent the coupons on - lucky that the stuff was not sold out. P3 has at last got away from the cows and doesn't have to get up quite so early. I wonder how long it will last but they ought to give her a chance to learn other aspects of farming than milking.

Well, here I am with another birthday 75 of them and I feel as if I might see a few more yet. As "M" said this morning Thank God that you are hale and hearty yet, but I do find the garden to be more like hard work and suppose that is only natural.

Afternoon tea is an acquired habit but it makes a very welcome break in the afternoon when your back is beginning to ache.

Well it's nearly nine o'clock and I'll finish up for today and finish off in the morning.

Wed 14.3 45

Your letter and enclosures came this morning and whilst I thank you very much I think it was too generous of you. There's one thing and that is that it will be the last thing that I shall do to withdraw. What do you say? Old miser, well perhaps so, but a few savings certificates are a good stand by in extremities.

I also had a birthday card from my sister Alice and a note saying it was in reply to the letter I wrote her at Xmas. She is staying at Blaenauon Monmouthshire, has had enough of London and went to Wales for peace and quietness as she says.

We've had another fine day 64 in shade, and bright sun, have just finished cutting the side lawn with M's help, the grass has grown very thick in places and kept on clogging the machine, and I suppose the weekly cutting has started. I wish it would cut itself. Well that's about all to tell you.  
The best of plants have gone to Marshalls direct.

Cheerio and best love  
Pa

Crossways  
Ludham  
Gt. Yarmouth  
21.3.45

My dear Babs,

I am afraid this letter is overdue, but with one job and another the days seem to go. I wonder if you have seen P. Pa forgot to say she was going to Keighley when he last wrote. I believe on Thursday for in fact we did not know till that evening that she had any idea of being off before Easter. Anyhow she left here early on Saturday morning and we expect her back about tea time next Monday. (26<sup>th</sup>) Meanwhile I am making the best of the time and working off all kinds of jobs that are behind hand. Glad you liked the blue stuff and I like the pattern which you sent in your last letter. Am hoping there may be a letter from you this morning. I am writing this before breakfast and have just woke Pa, 7.30. I have thought a lot about you lately, I wonder if the new person was appointed on Monday. F. will have a shock if Miss E puts the new mistress senior to her. I suppose she can do that if she chooses. I am afraid you will find it a big break to leave Keighley and also a big break to clear out all your belongings etc. I am wondering when Phyllis will be leaving, for I want her to go if possible by the time you come home in July. When it gets a bit nearer I think I will find out what her plans are (that is if she has any)

C and G are not coming here for Easter and I am really glad not to have that extra to think of. G says she hopes they can have a fortnights holiday in the summer. What C has done with his money they don't say only that it was put in the P. Off. and then £20 drawn out for a days shopping in London, I suppose a new suite, but have not heard anything further, neither have I heard from Dick for some time. I sent Alice the list. I expect you know that. My cold is now better I am glad to say and with good weather I have been able to do a bit to help clear up the garden. Have managed to do something towards that every day for a fortnight. We have plenty of flowers now and I do wish we could pass some of them on to you, but you must take some back after Easter. This time next week you will be getting off to Devon. How nice. I know you will enjoy that. Have you written to Bath yet. I have not heard from them for some time now. I sent V's book back with a letter and one to Annie just after you went back at ½ term. By the way, I think that the fact that Jack was on indefinite leave decided Phyllis to go home although she pooh poohs the idea of making a fuss of Jack

There are now 3 new girls at the Hall and two are living in there and I wonder if at the worst I could ask Phyllis to go there for about a fortnight for the last part of her time so that your things could be put away as they come, but must see about that later. The Apricots made a nice lot of jam and thanks for sending them.

Miss Broom is better now and goes back into her own place today. Mrs Tammias has had her for about a fortnight, how lucky for Miss B that she was able to take her. There's a new lodger at Braeside. Came yesterday, an Airman's wife. The camp here at Ludham is empty, and as it has been completely cleared out we wonder what is coming next.

Now, here is Pa, so breakfast! 8.30.

About a present of some kind for Rene. I hardly know what to suggest. Really it would be better to perhaps find something down there. I expect you will go to Torquay and possibly Plymouth. Pyrex is most useful and although there is nothing in that way to be got here, they are constantly advertising, so there may be some about somewhere or, after you have been there a day or two you might spot something that they really want. Today is W.I. and they are having a W. Drive. I expect to get a good bundle of finished articles in today and shall be glad to send some away. I have 3 bundles waiting to be made up. All this wool stuff takes a lot of room about the place. I can only send you another lot of wool for a rust cardigan. Will send 6 oz in case you need more for each one. The wool is not so good as the pink and it seems does not go as far.

Mrs Swanston is still feeling very poorly as the result of her fall and they are very handicapped as she has to be dressed practically and helped in many ways. It was her left hand and as she is left handed it makes it worse for her. Vera has to help her as best she can, so you can understand how difficult it is for them both. Her hand was put in plaster for 5 weeks, another 3 to go.

We have practically an epidemic of Diphtheria here in Ludham. One child of seven has died and I hear that last weekend there were 8 cases. Phyllis Powell was taken to the Isolation Hospital last Friday and small wonder at it considering the conditions some of the people here live – no water and disgusting sanitary arrangements, to say nothing of the milk distribution, but so long as the men who own these old cottages get their rent, what matters. Well I think this is about all now. No letter so will post this.

Much love and a kiss  
Mama

Crossways Ludham Norfolk  
Fri Mar 23. '45

Dear Billee

Your last letter came this morning, wasn't it a bit of a surprise that Miss S was finishing up. I expect that she will miss the work but they may possibly find her work locally. She could not very well leave K'ley and go far away, what with you leaving in the near future and the work finished up. I expect she is down in the dumps over it all. The Halifax visit seems to have been a nice change for you but what price bridge till after midnight. You must be getting quite a fan, glad to hear though that your cough has gone.

There seems to have been quite a lot of "to-do" over your resignation from school. It's a pity about Freeman but it would all have had to be gone through when Wilson packs up if Miss E had kept her word and you would have had to live with it then but now circumstances do not arise and also you will not have much to contend with so from that aspect you are well out of it.

I should not be at all surprised if C and G went on a flying visit to Bath, it's easier than coming down here but as he is working on Good Friday he would have to come on Saturday and go back on Monday. Of course there might be a late train to Bath Friday but I doubt it.

I don't see how we could come down to Bath and come back with you, there are several obstacles in the way but get the war in Europe over and we shall have a change of some sort..

As you went to Wakefield I suppose you will have some marketing to do. There is nothing startling to tell you as to Ludham – the weather has been exceptionally kind to us and I've finished digging the kitchen and dug well into the compost heap. but have not found any traces of a wasps nest yet. "M" has been doing quite a good bit of clearing up and weeding in the garden and has made the drives and edges look quite smart again after the winter recess but there is still a certain amount of straw about in odd places. I have started to turn out plants indoors to the frame and hope that there will not be any more severe frosts. Still its well through March and we should be lucky enough to miss any hard frosts.

We had a lively interlude just after 2.0 pm and the bungalow had a good shake up but I hear that they are clearing mines on the coast. There has been heavy gunfire today which it appears was big gun practice at Horsey, we frequently hear this, very often on a Sunday.

"M" has managed to get the skin off the top of the joint on two of her little toes. It's very painful and naturally not conducive to walking about except in the easiest of slippers. I tell her that it would be a good thing to let Nurse have a look at it but she says that she will do without that as long as she can.

We miss P3 but it's surprising what a difference she makes especially the 12.30 dinner. I suppose you will have seen her this week. I think she intended to come to the school.

We are well off for library books. They have sent two extra evidently taken from an old list which they have resurrected.

Sat morn I did intend enclosing this with the parcel of wool but it didn't get done. Nevertheless, as a letter goes quicker than a parcel you should get it as soon.

What do you think of the war news now and Churchill too, he must be in it somehow. The news is good and apparently progress is good, the statements are rather guarded. Perhaps now that North Holland is being dealt with Doodle bugs and rockets will die a natural death, hope so at any rate.

Well it's a fine afternoon and I'm going out to cut a lawn.

So Cheerio and best love

Pa

NO DATE – AMONGST MARCH 1945

Mon. Morn and washing

Dear Babs

You did not mention it but I conclude you got the C. C. book safely. It was put in with the Cape Mac. when that was sent. So sorry to hear about the cold that is going on its way. I wish that I had persuaded you to stay for a couple of days and when Pa thought you might not get the train at Norwich I was very glad but you know how hard it is to get you to pack up for a bit and I did not think it would be much good.

The plants went very quickly. I expect owing to the fact that the Navy has departed.